READ THE FIRST STORY IN THIS NUMBER. YOU WILL LIKE IT.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY G. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 515. FOR WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 12TH, 1898. [ONE PENNY.

NURSES AND DR TIBBLES' Vi-Cocoa

GIVES GREAT SATISFACTION.

Nurse WILKINSON, 30, Russell Street, Clitheroe:

"Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa gives every satisfaction, and I shall not fail to recommend it to my friends and patients."

REFRESHING, STIMULATING, PLEASANT.

Nurse SUNDERLAND, Shewview Villa, Cheam Road, Sutton, Surrey:

"I have tried Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, and find it a refreshing, stimulating, and pleasant beverage."

FOR EXCELLENCE.

Nurse GILKES, 11, St. Paul's Square, Southsea:

"I think Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa is excellent, and very good for those who suffer from indigestion. This I know practically."

NO PRAISE TOO HIGH.

Nurse SAFFREY, The Cottage, Hoddesdon Road, Belvedere, Kent:

"I am pleased to say I think more of the merits of Dr. Tibbles' than even the praise already bestowed upon it."

FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL SUFFERING.

Nurse CLARE, "The Laurels," Langley:

"I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to the value of Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, as I find it most beneficial to persons suffering physically and mentally. It is most nutritive and extremely pleasant to take, and I shall strongly recommend it to my patients."

CAN BE TESTED FREE.

Address (a postcard will do):

60, 61 & 62, BUNHILL ROW, LONDON, E.C.

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

MAKE PRIME BEER AT HOME

Good! it's Mason's

EXTRACT OF HERBS

6D. BOTTLE MAKES 8 GALLONS NON-INTOXICATING BEER

The most palatable refreshing tonic drink producible.

IMITATED but NOT EQUALLED

Of all Chemists and Stores. Also try Mason's Wine Essences and Mason's Coffee Essence. Sample bottle of either of above post FREE for 9d. Two, assorted, 1s. 8d.; Three, assorted, 1s. 8d. *Agents Wanted.*

NEWBALL & MASON, NOTTINGHAM.

The BEST BEVERAGE for YOUR MEALS.

The READIEST WRITER

. . THE . .

"RELIANCE" Fountain Pen,

Fitted with 14-carat Gold Nib (Iridium Tipped), Fine, Medium, or Broad Points.

Double Feed, Handsome Chased Vulcanite Holder.

THIS PEN WILL LAST FOR YEARS

EVERY PEN GUARANTEED.

WILL NOT GET OUT OF ORDER.

Sold at 10/6.

We send this pen, complete in box, with filler and directions, post free for

5/-

WONDERFUL VALUE.

THE RELIANCE PEN CO. LIMITED
26 IVY LANE,
PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.

Reduced Facsimile

REMEMBER, a 10/6 FOUNTAIN PEN for 5/-
Agents Wanted.

Reduced Facsimile

ESTABLISHED 1851.

BIRKBECK BANK

Southampton Bldngs., Chancery Lane, London, W.C.
Invested Funds, £10,000,000. No. of Accounts, 85,094.
TWO-AND-A-HALF per CENT. INTEREST allowed on DEPOSITS, repayable on demand. TWO per CENT. on CURRENT ACCOUNTS, on the minimum monthly balances, when not drawn below £100. STOCKS, SHARES, and ANNUITIES purchased and sold for customers. SAVINGS DEPARTMENT.—Small deposits received, and Interest allowed monthly on each completed £1. The BIRKBECK ALMANACK, with particulars, post free. FRANCIS RAVENSCROFT, *Manager.*
Telephone No. 5, Holborn. Telegraphic Address: "Birkbeck, London."

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.

Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality and size to any machine To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/- P.O. for ONE MONTH'S TRIAL. Balance can be paid 5/- Monthly. Call or write for designs and Samples of work. 39/-

THE ATLAS SEWING MACHINE CO.,
188B High St., Camden Town, London, N.W.;
63 Seven Sisters Rd., N.; 14 High Rd., Kilburn

PIANOS. UPRIGHT IRON GRAND.

Complete Iron frame, Brass Pin Plate, Nickel-bolted Wrest Plank, Check Action, Full Trichord, Full Compass, Riveted Hammers, Handsome Walnut Case, Inlaid Marqueterie Panel, Sconces, Trusses, etc. Tone and touch perfect. Guaranteed 25 years. 23 guineas, at 10/6 per month. Delivered free on payment of 10/6. Approval. Catalogues Free.

ORGANS. GENUINE AMERICAN.

Imported Direct. Solid Walnut Case, Mirror Top, Music Case, 2 Knee Swells, Mouse and Dust Proof, 8 Stops, 3 Sets of Reeds, 14 Guineas, at 6/- per month. 10 Stops, 3 Sets of Reeds, 2 Octave Couplers. 15 guineas, at 7/- per month. Illustrated Lists Free. Kindly mention this paper.

THE LONDON AND LIVERPOOL PIANOFORTE CO.,
Granby St. & Selborne St., LIVERPOOL.
Agents wanted where not represented.

ALL FAT PEOPLE

Readily **Reduce Weight** and **Cure Corpulency Permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are very agreeable, harmless, and never fail to PRESERVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of diet. **Reduction begins immediately.**

An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

MISS HEYWOOD, 77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, Lancs., says: "I am 21lb. lighter, and my rheumatism also seems cured."

MRS. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Station Road, Ross, Hereford, says: "Am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st."

MR. CANHAM, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned."

LADY CONSTANCE CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with the Tablets."

PRINCESS LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent Tablets directly."

COUNTESS G. FURSTENBERG, Stammheim, Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

MR. BUTLER, Surgeon, Hampton Manor, Evesham, says: "My patient lost more than a stone."

Send 2/6 to THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.

Don't Cough—use

They at once check the Cough and remove the cause.

The Unrivalled

One Lozenge alone relieves. Sold everywhere, Tins 13½d. each.

Keatings Lozenges

MANDOLINES.

FINE ITALIAN MODELS, 13 Red Maple Ribs, 7s. 6d.; Brown and White Ribs, 10s. 6d.; GENUINE ITALIAN, with 15 Maple Ribs, 15s. 6d.; ditto, 17 Rosewood Ribs, 17s.; 19 Rosewood Ribs, Pearl Inlaid, 24s.; ditto, superior, Closed Machine, 30s. Magnificent De Meglio Model, Rosewood, 50s.; ditto, superior, 63s. Genuine De Meglio, finest-toned instrument made, £5 15s. For cases, strings and pick, see list post free. All with machine heads and bent sound boards. Crate and carr. free.

JOSEPH RILEY'S,
ON CONSTITUTION HILL,
BIRMINGHAM.

NOSE MACHINE.

This is a contrivance by which the short cartilage of the nose is pressed into shape by wearing the instrument an hour daily for a short time. Price 10/6, sent free for stamps. ALEX ROSS, 62, Theobald's Road, London, opposite Bedford Row. Est. 1850. Parcel free from observation.

ZOX

CURES

NEURALGIA

Toothache, Headache, Sciatica, and all Nerve Pains.

PURE, HARMLESS, AND NON-APERIENT.

Do not be persuaded to take a substitute, there is nothing as good as ZOX.

Of all Chemists, 1s. and 2s. 6d. per Box.

ZOX Co., 11 HATTON GARDEN, E.C.

Digitized by Google

No. 515. For the Week ending November 12, 1898. ONE PENNY.

KING ELIJAH'S ACCESSION.

By ARCHIBALD MARSHALL.

The first story, describing how Elijah P. Jopp slew the Dragon, which had infested the country of Dummeleutia, appeared in the first number of *The Royal Magazine*.

I.

ELIJAH P. JOPP having slain the dragon that had infested the country of Dummeleutia, and having accepted half the kingdom as his reward, was crowned with the pomp that befitted his lofty station. He was cheered to the echo whenever he appeared in the public streets, and the Parliament of Dummeleutia carried a unanimous resolution that his bicycle should be cleaned and kept in order at the public expense.

The details of the coronation festival were carefully laid down and carried out by the Lord Chamberlain. There was some little difficulty about the crown, because there was only one, and that one King Ferdinand refused to give up under any consideration, even for the time necessary to put it on to Elijah's head, and take it off again. But Elijah said he did not take much stock in crowns anyway, and the one in use for pageants at the Theatre Royal would do quite well for him if it was rubbed up a bit, and the Court glazier was directed to replace the Koh-i-nor that had got mislaid some how, so that he need not have to wear it hindside in front.

Elijah said a few words after the coronation. This sort of thing was new to him, he said, and he hoped his loyal subjects would forgive him if he hadn't quite caught the hang of it (cheers). In the great country where he came from, monarchs were considered rather in the light of "funny business;" but he would say this, that he thought a monarch's berth would suit him very well, and that a little new blood in the concern would enable him and his partner to push things along a bit. He looked forward to a period of enlightened progress (cheers), and his subjects might bet their boots that their constitutional privileges, whatever they were, would be respected (loud applause and shrill laughter from a group of Members of Parliament). He would not keep them any longer from the entertainments provided for them, as they would probably have plenty of opportunities of hearing his views on subjects in general (renewed laughter from the Members of Parliament). He would only add that if they behaved well to him, he would behave well to them, and that now they might run away and play.

There was a scene of unparalleled enthusiasm. Elijah was hoisted on to the shoulders of four stalwart men, and carried round the town, somewhat to his discomfort, but as he said himself, a man wasn't crowned king every day, and he would put up with it for once. The band played "Was für ein lustige Kerl," and "Wir gehen nicht nach Hause bis Morgen." When Ferdinand and Elijah went home to supper the festivities continued.

The public holiday was an unmixed success, and the whole of the working portion of the populace went back to their business the next day thoroughly unsettled for the rest of the week.

With one exception. Elijah P. Jopp, who had been crowned King George VIII. of Dummeleutia, woke up the morning after the coronation alert and brisk, and eager to set about the task of raising his kingdom from a comparatively low place among the nations of Europe to a position which would enable its monarch to afford the expense of sending telegrams all over the world, and perhaps in time to gain a little piece of seaboard, so that Dummeleutia might build a ship or two and call herself mistress of the seas.

There was a great deal to be done. King Ferdinand had always played the part of a constitutional monarch for reasons which will shortly be explained. As long as his weekly allowance was paid to him regularly, and nobody interfered with his simple pleasures, which were not so very disreputable, all things considered, he allowed his counsellers and his Parliament to govern the kingdom. King George Elijah had very different ideas, and as he jumped out of bed the morning after the coronation he was all on fire to put them into execution.

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

The first thing to be done was to come to an understanding with Ferdinand, so after a light breakfast he walked across from the hotel where he was still "located," as he would have said, to the Royal Palace to interview his brother monarch. The palace was one of a row of semi-detached villas, each with quite a nice little strip of garden behind it, situated in a quiet surburban road, not far from the public park. There was another palace in the country called Annaslust, but it was at present let furnished to a rich wine merchant. The reason for this state of things must now be explained.

King Ferdinand's father had begun to reign at a time when the kingdom of Dummeleutia was in the prosperous state alluded to above, and he had reigned for forty years. *His* father had been all that a king should be, and King Otto had begun his reign with two or three fine palaces, a handsome retinue, and sufficient means to keep up a considerable amount of state. He was only twenty-two when he came to the throne, and had immediately begun a career of folly and extravagance which eventually landed him in the bankruptcy court. He had mortgaged every one of his palaces, which all had to go, with the exception of Annaslust, which had been settled on his wife.

Elijah was hoisted on the shoulders of four stalwart men and carried round the town.

By the time the crisis came, King Otto had lost his place in the world's esteem. He had never taken any interest in the affairs of the kingdom, which went on very well without him. There was a talk of deposing him and running Dummeleutia as a republic, but the populace rose and vetoed that proposition. There was the usual state of jealousy in Dummeleutia between the classes and the masses, and King Otto, by his tastes and his social connections, had allied himself to the masses. The common people looked upon him as one of themselves, and they weren't going to have him deposed at any price.

However, they didn't want him raised again to such a pinnacle as to place him out of their reach, so eventually it was arranged that the semi-detached villa in Parkstrasse should be taken for him and the rent paid out of the taxes, and here he had lived during the rest of his reign, spending what money he could get and running into debt whenever he could obtain credit.

Here Prince Ferdinand had been brought up, and as he had never known anything better, was comparatively contented in the lower middle-class society, which was the best that was open to him.

II.

KING FERDINAND was not up yet, said the servant who opened the door. He had had his breakfast in bed and had sent it down almost untouched, with the exception of the tea, and he had ordered another pot of that, which he was drinking now. She never saw such goings on, she said, and if that was the way a respectable house was going to be conducted, she should find another situation, and so she told him, king or no king.

King Ferdinand did not look at all royal as he made his appearance a quarter of an hour later, in a shabby dressing-gown and slippers very much down at heel. He bore rather a battered appearance, and did not appear to advantage beside his brisk and dapper brother king.

"Excuse our late appearance," he said, as he came into the room. Elijah looked at him critically, and made up his mind to induce him to join the Young Rechabites No-Liquor League, of which he had been a member ever since his boyhood, in the near future. Just at present, however, there was more important business to be done.

"Come to talk shop?" he said shortly.

"Oh, don't," said Ferdinand, passing his hand wearily across his brow. "We can't stand it at this time in the morning; we can't really, brother King."

"Swaller some aerated water, and listen to me," said Elijah.

Ferdinand did as he was told, and resigned himself to listen with a melancholy air.

"You ain't been carrying on this business as it oughter been carried on," said Elijah.

"What business?" asked Ferdinand.

"The kingdom," said Elijah. "Look at you living in this yer low down hole. You ain't used your power."

"Our dear fellow," said Ferdinand, "we have no power; Parliament has got it all."

"Oh, has it!" said Elijah. "Presoomably it thinks it has. I guess it's going to find out that it's made a mistake. What do you draw?"

"What do we——?"

"What do you take a week out of the concern?"

"You mean how is our privy purse replenished?"

"You've hit it. What's the figure?"

"Well, Parliament allows us £2 a week and a furnished house. Then there's the rent of our royal residence at Annaslust; that comes to another £5 a week. That is all we have to live upon, and it's very little, George, very little."

The tears came into the king's eyes as he disclosed his state of dire poverty.

"Cheer up," said Elijah cheerfully. "I'm going to alter that for you. But ain't there any pickings?"

"*No* pickings," said poor Ferdinand pitifully.

"Oh, come now, what do you charge for making a dook?"

"We don't charge anything," said Ferdinand. "The Prime Minister settles who is to be ennobled, and we sign the patents."

"Oh, do you?" said Elijah, and he made his entry in his notebook. "Got many other papers to sign?" he asked.

"A great many," said Ferdinand. "It sometimes takes us a whole hour to get through the work."

Digitized by Google

"And you don't get nothing for that?"

"Only the £2 a week. That is what it is paid for. Nothing the Parliament settles can become law unless I sign the papers."

Elijah made another note.

"Now, I'll tell you what I'm going to do, Ferdy," said Elijah. "I'm going to act straight about this business.

The tears came into the King's eyes.

We go shares on what we make. You've halved what you got with me, and it's worth more than you thought it was. It ain't legally in the bargain, but to show you what a white man's like when you come across one, I'm going to halve what I've got with you. And I'm going to do it right now. I figure out at a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and there's a cheque for seventy-five of 'em made out to you." He took a signed cheque out of his pocket, and handed it across the table to Ferdinand, who took it with tears in his eyes.

"We didn't expect this," he said with deep emotion.

"Put it there," said Elijah, holding out a sinewy hand. Ferdinand gripped it.

"Now we're square," said Elijah. "You're worth seventy-five thousand dollars as well as your screw from the Government. You do what you like with your money. That's understood. But if you take my advice, you'll pay the best part of that cheque into joint account. I'll do the same with what I've got. There'll be plenty to do with it. And it ain't all the money you're going to get neither. With regard to these yere papers—I've got to sign them now as well as you, and I ain't going to do my part of the job under five dollars a sign. You stick out for the same, and we'll pick up a bit that way."

Ferdinand's eyes and mouth opened wide.

"With regard to dooks," continued Elijah, "there's going to be 'en more dooks made this day month at a thousand dollars a dook."

"Why, there'll be a revolution!" gasped Ferdinand.

"Jesso," said Elijah. "And we lead the Popular party. We ain't going to have no aristocracy lording it over us. This is going to be a free country, and King Ferdinand and King George are going to run it. Ever kissed a baby?"

Ferdinand rolled his head helplessly. "We should like a little more money," he said pathetically, "but otherwise we're very well contented as we are. *Don't* upset things, George. Don't do it."

"Bosh!" said Elijah tersely. "You leave things to me. You've only got to keep quiet and spend the dollars when I get 'em for you. I'm going to put this business through, and you lay your boots I ain't going to make a mess of it. Not if you do what you're told."

"What are we told?" asked Ferdinand.

"Don't sign a paper unless I tell you to. That's one thing. Take me round and introdooce me to your pals; that's another. Keep your mouth shet. That's the third and last."

"We will do all that you tell us," said King Ferdinand.

"That's right," said Elijah. "We're going to forment this yer revolootion, and when we've put it through you won't be lo'ed any longer in a hundred dollar shanty in a black lot."

"We are deeply touched," said King Ferdinand, with tears in his eyes. "We will follow your instructions to the letter, George. We haven't been much of a fellow—we haven't had a chance. But restore us to our rightful position, and we'll try and make a new start. After all, we are the descendant of a long line of kings, and born to better things."

"That's all right," said Elijah kindly. "You're no nigger. And now I must set to work."

III.

THE Parliament of Dummeleutia was divided into two parties, the Aristocratic and the Popular. The former was in office at the time of Elijah's accession, and held the field by a large majority. The Prime Minister was a certain Count Pilsenheim, who was a young blood of about twenty-six, beautifully dressed, and possessed of a very fair idea of his own importance. He knew very little about politics; in fact, the business of the state was practically carried on by permanent officials; but Count Pilsenheim was a good figure-head, which was all-important in a community where royalty was socially non-existent.

Count Pilsenheim was sitting at breakfast in his town house one morning about a week after the conversation

He handed it across the room to Ferdinand.

between the two Kings of Dummeleutia, already recorded. The Countess Pilsenheim was pouring out tea; the Prime Minister was reading the morning paper.

"I believe," said the Countess, "that new king is up

Digitized by Google

to some mischief. Parker tells me that he and Ferdinand have been driving all about the town in a landau with a

The royal summons was delivered to the Prime Minister by the club waiter.

pair of horses, and the people cheer them wherever they go."

"Let 'em cheer," said the Prime Minister. "I don't think Master Ferdy can do us much harm. I'll give him what for if he tries any of his little games on."

"I'm not so certain about Master George," said the Countess. "You know what these pushing Americans are. Parker's sister, who is a dressmaker and lives in the next house to Ferdinand's in the Parkstrasse, told her that George is boarding with Ferdinand now, and that people are going in and out all day long. She says that Johann Busch was there for the whole afternoon the other day."

Now Johann Busch was the leader of the Popular party in the parliament of Dummeleutia.

"The deuce he was!" said the Prime Minister. "I'll soon stop that. I've to go and see Master Ferdy this morning. Wellstein tells me that there are some papers that require his valuable signature. You might just drop him a line to say that I shall be there at eleven, will you? Tell him if I don't turn up by a quarter past to come round to the club. I'm going there to have a game of billiards, and I may not have finished in time. I'll take the papers with me."

When the Countess Pilsenheim's note reached King Ferdinand he was engaged with Elijah in drawing up a list of people who were to be ennobled—for a consideration received—when the present government should have been ousted in favour of one more in sympathy with royal aspirations. Johann Busch stood at the head of the list.

"He's a swollen-headed bag o' wind," said Elijah, "but he's got the people behind him, and he's going to do what he's told, although he don't know it yet." Johann Busch would not have dared to submit his own name for a title when he was in office, the people would not have liked it; but Elijah had promised that he should be ennobled during the premiership of Count Pilsenheim, and Johann Busch thought that that was rather a good joke, and well worth paying five thousand marks for. He had been so far won over by Elijah as to promise that if his party came into power the Government would bring in a Bill for making suitable grants to the reigning monarchs, and Elijah had promised in his turn that all available places at Court should be distributed among the Popular party. Ferdinand demurred at this, but Elijah explained that such a plan would break the back of the Aristocratic tyranny, and when they had learnt to behave themselves and accept the Royal supremacy, they might come back and be humble servants where they had been accustomed to consider themselves masters.

The Countess Pilsenheim's note was brought in by Ferdinand's housekeeper. It ran thus:

To His Most Gracious Majesty, King Ferdinand.

SIRE,—The Prime Minister will have the honour of waiting on Your Majesty with important documents of State at eleven o'clock. Should the Prime Minister not arrive at Your Majesty's house by a quarter past eleven, please go at once to Weiss's Club, Jacobstrasse, and inquire for Count Pilsenheim, who will wait on Your Majesty there when disengaged.

I have the honour to be,
Your Majesty's most obedient servant,
B. PILSENHEIM.

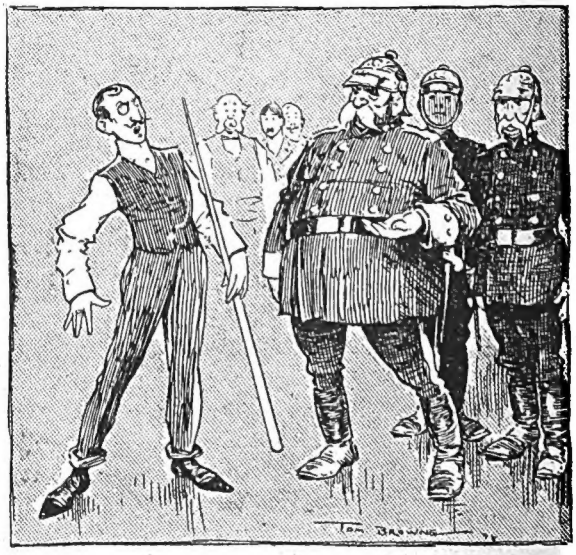
King Ferdinand read the note and looked nervously at his watch.

"It's half-past ten already," he said. "We wish he would give us longer notice. We don't believe there's a glass of sherry or a biscuit in the house. We bet Sarah hasn't dusted out the best parlour, and we haven't shaved this morning. We must go and see about it."

"Wait a minute," said Elijah. "Who is the billy-doo from?"

He took it up and read it.

"Well now, that's what I call real nerve," he said.



"I arrest you in the name of their Majesties the Kings."

"That young man is going to find out that he ain't so big as he thinks himself, not by some sizes. Say, Sarah, is that flunkey still on show on the sidewalk?"

Digitized by Google

But Count Pilsenheim's footman, having done his duty in Parkstrasse, had taken himself off to a more aristocratic quarter of the town.

"You put on your shawl and bonnet, Sarah, and carry

He found himself in the grasp of two policemen.

this note round to Weiss's," said Elijah. "We'll have my lord out of that in no time."

Sarah was not disinclined for a little outing, and went to prepare herself for her walk while Elijah wrote:

Their Majesties, King Ferdinand and King George, desire the attendance of the Prime Minister at their palace in Parkstrasse without delay.

"Do you think he'll quite like it?" asked Ferdinand anxiously. "He's a tremendous swell, you know, George. We should be careful if we were you."

"'Tain't me that's got to be careful, it's him," said Elijah, "and so he'll find out before he's half an hour older"

The royal summons was delivered to the Prime Minister by the club waiter as he was in the middle of a game of pool. He read it and threw it into the grate. "Oh, they do, do they?" he said as he prepared himself for his stroke. "Well, it won't do them any harm to go on desiring it for another hour or so. Tell the messenger to say I shall be round about twelve o'clock, waiter—or, no, say I'm too busy to come, but the Kings are to come round here in half an hour and wait in the hall till I'm ready. That'll take 'em down a bit, I think." Then he neatly pocketed the previous player's ball, failed to do the same with the nearest, but left himself safely up under the cushion and was glad.

The game went on tranquilly for another half-hour, when a considerable commotion was heard on the stairs outside. The door burst open, and a stalwart Inspector of Police, followed by two constables, entered the room and came straight towards the Prime Minister.

"Carl Pilsenheim, I arrest you in the name of their Majesties the Kings," he said, in a loud voice, and then in a lower key: "Warn you anything say now used evidence 'gainst you."

"What's the meaning of this?" exclaimed the astonished Prime Minister, while the rest of the players stood round in the utmost consternation.

"Ordered to take you at once into the presence of their Majesties," said the Inspector. "Better come quietly, sir. Got a cab outside."

"Presence of their Majesties!" exclaimed the irate Prime Minister, throwing down his cue. "By George, yes! That'll just suit me. Come along, Fritz. If I don't give Master Ferdinand and Master George——" but the rest of the right honourable gentleman's remarks were lost as he made his way down the staircase, two steps at a time, thirsting for the fray with his liege lords and masters.

The two Kings sat waiting for him in the dining-room of 8 Parkstrasse, Ferdinand quivering with excitement, Elijah cool and collected. Two tall policemen stood motionless just inside the door. The Chief Inspector of Police had been put on the list of those to whom titles were to be given at an early date, and the whole Metropolitan Police force of Putzenheim was now at the bidding of the Royal and Popular party. A cab drove rapidly up to the door, and the enraged Prime Minister jumped quickly out of it followed by his cousin young Fritz von Fiddledorf, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (£2,000 a year), and the police inspector who followed them into the house.

"Look here, Ferdinand," began the Prime Minister, furiously, as he burst into the room. "I'm blowed if I'm going to put up with your——" At this point he found himself in the grasp of the two policemen, one of whom laid a heavy and not over clean hand upon his mouth, while the calm but penetrating voice of Elijah was heard from the other side of the table.

"Look here, if you ain't pretty careful what you say, you'll find yourself locked up mighty sharp. Comprenny? I'm King of this country and so's Ferdinand

"Make 'em out yourself!" he cried.

here, and we're going to be treated as such. Don't leave go of him, policeman, till I've said what I'm going to say. I've got to inform you, Mr Count Pilsenheim, that King Ferdinand and King Me are going to take up our

Digitized by Google

positions as rulers of this yer realm right now, and disrespectful speech from a subject is going to be punished with imprisonment. Give him his head, Robert."

Something in Elijah's aspect—some hint perhaps of the divinity that doth hedge a king, even in Dummeleutia—took effect upon the Prime Minister. When the two policemen released him he did not break out into that torrent of abuse to which his outraged feelings and his contempt for Ferdinand prompted him. He stood and glowered silently instead.

The Prime Minister was led struggling from the room.

"Got the papers?" inquired Elijah.

"Yes," said the Prime Minister.

"Yes, what?"

"Yes, sire."

"Thank you. Fetch 'em right here."

Fritz von Fiddledorf handed the documents to his chief, and without any further preface the four men proceeded to business. Elijah took complete charge of it. The Prime Minister sulkily explained the purport of each paper, prompted by young Fritz. Sometimes he knew nothing of what the paper was about, and then Elijah told him to take it away, and find out, which did not sweeten his temper. Elijah signed what he had a mind to, and handed the documents on to Ferdinand, who did the same without asking any questions.

When the business was over the Prime Minister gathered up the papers, his lip curling, and his brow bent. He was evidently about to say something, but Elijah forestalled him.

"I've got another little job for you," he said. "Here's a list of dookships you can make out patents for, and let me have 'em by to-morrow morning at eleven o'clock."

The Prime Minister glanced at the list. The first name that met his eye was that of Johann Busch. He read no further.

"Make 'em out yourself," he cried, as he threw the paper down, "and be hanged to you! Think I'm going to be ordered about by a mere American showman? You come outside, and I'll mark you. I'll make things so hot for you, my fine fellow, that you'll find yourself over the frontier in a week's time, with your tail between your legs. And as for you, Ferdinand, let me tell you——"

But at this point the Prime Minister was once more gagged by the policemen, and, although he struggled furiously, he could only emit meaningless sounds which scarcely expressed the thoughts that burnt hot within him.

"Take him off to chokee," said Elijah cheerfully. "He'll revile his liege Majesty, the King, will he? We'll see about that."

And so the Prime Minister was led struggling from the room, and locked up in the city gaol.

"And now the fat's in the fire," said Elijah. "Ferdy, you and me have begun our glorious reign."

"The Laughing Princess" next week.

Digitized by Google

MISS JOHNSON'S PLAN.

One of the most striking characteristics of woman is her cheerful perseverance in looking under the bed for a thief. No man in his senses ever looks under his bed for a burglar but there are millions of women in this country who would find it quite impossible to sleep in any bed under which they had not previously searched for a concealed man.

Experience is lost upon them. The average unmarried woman, of forty years of age, has usually looked under the bed at least 7,500 times, without ever once finding the expected man; but she is not the least discouraged by so long a course of failure, and it would be easy to find women, eighty or ninety years old, who still nightly search for the man they have never found.

Miss Johnson will hereafter be famous as a woman whose long perseverance has been signally rewarded. It would be indelicate to inquire into her precise age—had she not described herself in a recent affidavit as having been born in the year 1855?—and we may therefore take it for granted that she is at least forty-three years old.

If we presume that she began to look under the bed at the age of fifteen, it follows that she has performed that ceremony more than 10,000 times.

Until the other Friday night, she never found the smallest fragment of a man under her bed; but on that eventful night her perseverance was rewarded, and the long-sought man greeted her astonished gaze.

Miss Johnson, being an unmarried lady, not wholly unconnected with the milliner's trade, and full of womanly independence, resides entirely alone, in a small house containing but three rooms—a kitchen, shop, and bedroom.

Dogs she despises, and cats she mistrusts; while, as for men, she regards them as poor creatures who may possibly have their uses in the time of hard frost, when water must be carted from the nearest stream, but who, as a rule, make more trouble about a house than their necks are worth.

Holding these views, it naturally follows that Miss Johnson lives alone, and the cool bravery with which she locks up her house at night, and seeks her solitary couch (no matter if a first-class thunderstorm is in progress) has for years been the admiration of the more timid of her sex.

It was about eleven o'clock on that Friday night when Miss Johnson stooped down and looked under the bed for a possible man, precisely as she had done on 10,000 previous nights.

Whether she was or was not astonished at perceiving a large-sized man lying under the bed, with the back of his head towards her, will never be known, but at any rate, she gave no sign of astonishment, and did not even inform the man that she saw him.

On the contrary, she resumed with great deliberation the nocturnal twisting of her back-hair, and even softly hummed, "Come into the garden, Maud," with as much distinctness as could be expected of a woman while holding a comb between her teeth.

Her back hair being finally finished, she opened her window, turned down the lamp until it gave forth a dim and modest light, and then stepped gracefully into bed, but not to sleep.

That sagacious woman was perfectly aware that the man under the bed, not suspecting that he had been discovered, would creep forth with a view to plunder as soon as he thought that she was asleep.

The bedstead stood in a corner of the room, and from the position of the man it was plain that he would creep out at the side of the bed. Miss Johnson, therefore, changed her usual manner of composing herself to rest, and lay, as she subsequently expressed it, "flat as a pancake," with her head projecting over the side of the bed at the precise locality where she expected the man to appear.

For at least half an hour she lay perfectly still, watching for the man with a steal hy vigilance that would have done credit to an astute and experienced cat.

Not a muscle or a hairpin of her frame moved, and her breathing was as slow and regular as that of a profound sleeper. At engths the man, confident that she was asleep, softly began to worm himself from under the bed.

Little did he imagine that a pair of pitiless grey eyes were awaiting for the appearance of his head, while a pair of lithe and nervous hands were ready to pounce upon his ears.

It was not many minutes, however, before each ear was suddenly caught in an inexorable grasp, and his head began to oscillate with remarkable speed between the floor and the edge of the bedstead.

Von Moltke himself could not have surpassed Miss Johnson's tactics. She had the man completely at her mercy, and he was helpless as though his head were in the stocks.

At first his captor maintained a grim silence; but after she had bumped him sufficiently to ease her mind, she addressed him on the wickedness and folly of seeking to rob her.

In vain did the man protest that his motives were innocent, that he had mistaken the house, and had merely intended to take a quiet nap under his own bedstead where the flies could not find him out.

Miss Johnson sternly told him that he could not make her believe any such nonsense, and that she would "let him know," and would also "show him."

These threats were carried out by a renewal of the bumping process, until the man yelled for mercy so loudly that the neighbours were aroused, and rushed to Miss Johnson's house with the firm conviction that a gang of burglars had murdered that excellent woman, and were quarrelling over the division of her spoils.

It was not until a strong force, armed with clubs and hatchets, had recklessly entered the room, that Miss Johnson surrendered her captive, with the remark that the sooner they took themselves off the better, and that if any other man would like to hide under the bed, she was entirely ready to knock a little sense into him.

Thus the intrepid woman not only defended herself with the most signal success, but she pointed out the true way to deal with a man under the bed. W. A.

Digitized by Google

HIS VINDICATION.

"LET'S see, Wilkins; it's about seven years since you left Mayton, is it not?"

"Yes, seven years this spring."

"I suppose that by this time you have become such an excellent newspaper man that you feel far above we country editors now, eh?"

"Oh, by no means, Grimes. Of course, the country newspaper business is not to be compared with metropolitan journalism, but it's a fairly good business after all.

"Country journalism is all right in its way, but a man could work on a country paper like the *Mayton News* for a century and never broaden out. The field is is too narrow; nothing about it to develop a man."

Mr. William Wilkins, of the *London Daily Messenger*, spoke with the air of a man to whom success had come. He puffed away at his cigar and looked rather disdainfully at his companion, Simon Grimes, editor of the *Mayton Weekly News*.

"That may be your idea, Wilkins, but it is a mistaken one," said Grimes.

Wilkins shook his head.

"Well, have your way about it, Wilkins. But you will doubtless admit that the lessons you learnt while serving your apprenticeship on the *Mayton News* were a great factor in the success you have met with in metropolitan journalism."

"Yes, I suppose it did help me a little. But my success is due to the fact that I worked hard and tried to succeed."

William Wilkins looked as if he were satisfied with himself, and as he sauntered down the one business street of Mayton he knew that he was the observed of all observers.

Members of the staff of the *Daily Messenger* had been heard to say that Wilkins was over-estimated, but this was laid to jealousy. That Wilkins had a high opinion of himself was beyond question, for he acted it. And when he went back to Mayton, the place of his birth, for a short visit, he felt that he was conferring a favour upon the denizens of that sleepy little village by giving them an opportunity of clasping him by the hand and calling him Wilkins, as they did in the years gone by.

Everyone thought a lot of him in Mayton, and when Grimes remarked that he was clever, but still had a lot to learn, people said Grimes was envious.

Each day, when Wilkins dropped into the *News* office, he would begin talking about the dignity of daily journalism, and Grimes, who had founded the *News* a quarter of a century before, would manfully defend the country editor.

"Look here, Grimes," said Wilkins one day, "for fifteen years your party has not been in it in this county, and the result is a ring at the county seat that is waxing rich off the taxpayers. If I had control of the *News* I would go to work and get up an exposure of the crookedness. There's a great field there."

"Yes, I rather believe there is some crookedness in county affairs, but I am not looking for fame in that direction."

"What will you give me, Grimes, if I go to work and get up an exposure of that court house ring?"

"Don't want it. If I did I'd get it up myself."

Mr. William Wilkins laughed loud and long. The idea of old Simon Grimes wr ting anything but little personal items was too humourous.

"Well, that's good, Grimes. I imagine that you'd get up a mighty spicy story."

"I fancy I could write one that would be interesting if I tried," was Grimes' calm reply.

"Well, if there is a murder in Mayton before I go back to London I'll write it up for you, old man," said Wilkins patronisingly as he prepared to go.

"Thank you for nothing," said Grimes.

"By-the-way, Grimes, I'm going home on Tuesday, and Colonel Waring is going to have a little social gathering at his home the night before in my honour. I want to write it up myself. It will be rather a swell affair for this village, and I want it done decently, especially as it is in my honour."

"All right, my boy," remarked Grimes. "We'll do it all right."

Colonel Waring, who was the wealthiest man in Mayton, occupied a handsome residence on the outskirts, and his home was the gathering place of all Mayton young folks. He and Mrs. Waring lived alone save for the companionship of a young girl who was more daughter than maid. Folks hinted that Mary Scott would inherit the Waring fortune, but Mary went about her household duties just like a servant.

The young people of the village, with true democracy,

Digitized by Google

overlooked the fact that she was a housemaid, and Mary was a welcome guest at all the social gatherings.

When the Monday night came on which Wilkins was to be tendered a farewell reception, the Waring mansion was a blaze of lights, and by eight o'clock was filled with merry young men and women. Wilkins, the guest of honour, moved about with a condescending air and distributed his favours with an impartial hand. Simon Grimes was there, for Simon was a bachelor, and bachelors were eligible to Mayton society despite accumulated years.

"Good evening, Grimes," said Wilkins, when the editor of the *News* came in.

"All ready to make the write-up of your life, eh?"

"We'll get it up all right, my boy," was the cheery rejoinder.

And the evening was spent in merry games and laughter, music and good cheer, and the Mayton girls declared that Mr. Wilkins was just too clever for anything. Several went so far as to wish that a clever journalist like Wilkins would purchase the *News*. Old Grimes didn't know how to write up anything.

If Grimes heard these comments he said nothing, but patiently secured a list of names of those present, for the *News* always printed the names of the guests at Mayton's social functions.

And at last the guests had departed and the lights in the Waring mansion were extinguished.

William Wilkins walked home with one of the Mayton girls, and after bidding her good-night at the gate, went to the village hotel and retired for the night. He did not sleep well, for he was thinking that he would like to show these Mayton people how a live journalist could handle a great news item. And in a fitful slumber he dreamt of solving a deep mystery and receiving the plaudits of a wondering people.

Just as he was dreaming of being tendered a public reception for exposing corrupt practices, he was aroused by a loud knocking at his door.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed the half-awakened journalist.

"Get up, Mr. Wilkins," shouted the landlord. "There's been an awful murder committed."

"What's that!" shouted the now thoroughly aroused Wilkins. "Who has been murdered?"

"Colonel Waring, sir."

"Great Heavens!" ejaculated Wilkins, and he hurried into his clothes and down the stairs.

"I don't know anything about it, sir," said the landlord in response to Wilkins' inquiries, "any more than the Colonel was found in the library this morning with a knife wound in his heart."

Wilkins swallowed a hasty breakfast and hurried to the Waring mansion. Despite the early hour the news had spread over the village and most of the inhabitants were gathered about the place.

The village constable stood guard at the door of the house and refused admission to all. But when Wilkins appeared the constable opened the door for him to pass in. It was not often that a representative of a great metropolitan journal appeared in Mayton, and when one did appear he was to be treated with due deference. As he entered the door Wilkins saw Grimes walking about and conversing with the awe-stricken people.

"Here's my chance to show the old duffer how to work up a good story," muttered Wilkins.

Wilkins walked directly to the library. The Colonel's body had not been disturbed, The constable had given orders that it was not to be touched until the authorities had taken the case in hand.

Wilkins made a hasty examination of the room. In a bow window on the south side was the Colonel's desk. The old man had been stabbed while sitting in his easy chair at the desk. The head had dropped over upon the desk, disturbing a little pile of papers. In the Colonel's hand were some folded papers, and the other hand grasped the arm of the chair. Wilkins looked for the wound and found it.

From a rent in the left breast of the Colonel's coat a stream of blood had oozed, trickling to the floor and branching out into two or three small streams.

Wilkins saw at a glance that the wound was caused by a dagger of some kind, and that the blade had pierced the heart. Death must have been instantaneous. The young man gazed about the room, but saw no signs of confusion. The window blinds were drawn and the lamp on the Colonel's desk was still burning.

Wilkins examined the window fastenings and discovered that all of them were locked. It was evident that the murderer had not entered by one of the library windows. Then he stepped to the library door and called for Mary, the housemaid.

Mary, pale, but possessed, answered his call and the two stood in the hall, while Wilkins questioned her about the awful affair.

"Mary, when was the murder discovered?"

"A few minutes after six, sir."

"Who discovered the body?"

"I did, sir."

"Tell me all about it, Mary."

"Well, sir, it was just this way. After the people had all gone last night Colonel Waring told Mrs. Waring and me that he was going to take the 5.20 train this morning, and told us not to call him, for he would lay down on the couch in the library instead of going to bed. He bade us good-night and went into the library. Before I went to bed I fastened all the windows in the house and locked the doors."

"Are you sure the windows were all fastened?"

"Yes, sir. That was about the first thing I learnt to do after I came to live with the Colonel and Mrs. Waring."

"Were the doors locked when you got up this morning?"

"Yes sir."

"Well, go on with your story."

"I got up about a quarter to six and lighted the kitchen fire. While waiting for it to burn, I thought I would open the library windows and air the room. You know that's where the men smoked last night. You can see that the Colonel's desk is right across the room from the door.

"When I opened the door I saw him sitting at the desk. I said 'good morning,' but as he didn't answer me I thought he was asleep. I saw the lamp was burning and I thought I'd better blow it out, so I slipped across the room to do it. Just as I leant over to blow it out, I saw blood on the Colonel's clothes; and then I screamed."

As she spoke the last words, Mary covered her face with her hands and began to weep.

"Don't cry, Mary," said Wilkins. "Brace up and tell me the rest."

Mary dried her tears and told the rest of her story. She ran out of the library and called Mrs. Waring. Mrs. Waring ran to the library, and when she saw the body of her murdered husband, she promptly fainted. Mary

Digitized by Google

dragged her into the hall and revived her, and then hastened out to give the alarm. That was all she could tell.

Wilkins walked into the library again and made a careful examination of the body. The Colonel's purse and watch were untouched, and it was evident that the desk had not been disturbed, as it was still locked. It was clear that the murderer had entered by one of the doors. But if that was the case the murderer had a key, for Mary was sure both doors were locked when she got up.

Wilkins left the house and hurried to the telegraph office to send a wire to the *Daily Messenger*. In a short time he received instructions to remain in Mayton and work up the case. When he returned to the Waring mansion he again saw Grimes walking about the grounds.

"Come in the house, Grimes, and examine things," said Wilkins.

"No, I think I've got all there is to get for a while," replied Grimes.

Wilkins muttered something about old fogies and clodhoppers and entered the house. A detective was on the spot.

Mary told her story to the officer just as she had told it to Wilkins, and Mrs. Waring corroborated it. The window fastenings about the house were examined and found to be locked, and there was no trace of the knife that had penetrated the Colonel's heart. But nothing more could be learnt.

Wilkins walked up to the *News* office and found Grimes writing away at his disordered desk.

"Well, Grimes, here's where you and I will have a chance to show which is best, country or town methods. I am going to remain here until this mystery is cleared up."

"I don't want to see you leave, my boy, but I hope it will be cleared up soon."

Grimes did not look up while addressing Wilkins, but went on with his writing. After resting a few minutes Wilkins went again to the Waring mansion and made a minute examination of the grounds. He could find nothing that offered a possible clue, and after spending an hour or more, went to the hotel and wrote a long story for the *Daily Messenger*.

The next day he made another examination of the house and grounds, and talked again with Mary and Mrs. Waring. But it was no use; the mystery only seemed to grow darker, and William Wilkins, special reporter for the London *Daily Messenger*, was puzzled. He went to the *News* office and asked Grimes if he had learnt anything.

"You certainly know as much about it as I do," said Grimes. "I've had to do a hundred things since the murder, while you have nothing to do but work it up. What have you found out?"

Wilkins was forced to admit that he had not discovered anything.

"That's strange," said Grimes. "A city newspaper man like you should have discovered the whole thing by this time."

Wilkins imagined that he discerned a covert sneer in Grimes' remark.

"I wonder if the old fossil has struck a clue," he muttered. "It would be just my luck if he stumbled on to the truth of the matter and upset my reputation here."

But if Grimes had a clue he kept it to himself. He refused to let Wilkins see a proof of the *News'* murder story when that worthy asked for them, and was even rude when Wilkins offered to help him write the murder report for the *News*.

In the meanwhile Wilkins had written a graphic account of Colonel Waring's life, and the *Messenger* had printed the Colonel's portrait and a picture of the Waring residence.

The managing editor had wired Wilkins to send something each day, and to remain on the spot as long as necessary.

Just before noon on the Friday after the murder, Grimes stopped Wilkins in the street and handed him a copy of the *News*, fresh from the press.

"You'll find the whole story of the murder in that paper," said Grimes.

Wilkins opened the paper—he fairly gasped, for there under black headlines that were truly metropolitan in appearance, was a long account of the Waring murder.

Wilkins read the story with an astonishment that brought forth strong words.

It was written by a master hand. It was rich in detail, and nothing seemed too small to be mentioned if it was in any way connected with the affair. It told the whole story of the murder. It began with an account of the reception in Wilkins' honour and told of everything that had happened.

The murderer (so it ran) had been a guest at the Colonel's home that night, but, for reasons apparent to all, his name could not be given. While the Colonel was bidding his guests good-night the murderer had stolen into the library and concealed himself behind a curtain at a window. He had heard the Colonel mention his trip of the following morning and knew that he would enter the library before taking the early train. He remained there until the Colonel came in and seated himself at the desk. Then the murderer had slipped up behind him and driven the dagger into the heart of the unsuspecting old man.

The motive? There was none. The murder was the freak of a maniac, and the fatal blow was struck with the strength of a madman. Drawing the dagger from the wound the murderer had calmly waited until the household had retired and then effected his escape. He had gone down to the hall and into the kitchen. Then he raised a trap-door that led to the cellar, and from the cellar had escaped through an opening.

While crawling out of the cellar he had left a small bloodstain. Crawling carefully round the house, the murderer hastened to the front gate, the knife still clutched in his hand. Hesitating before passing through the gate, the murderer stuck his knife into the gate post and, crawling on his hands and knees, peered out into the road. Seeing no one he had walked back and secured the knife and then disappeared in the darkness.

Wilkins could scarcely believe his eyes. But he rushed to the Waring mansion with the speed of a race horse and asked permission to examine the cellar. Yes, there was a faint bloodstain. Then Wilkins examined the gate post and found the mark where a knife had been stuck into it. Back to the *News* office raced Wilkins.

"Grimes, tell me who it was that killed Waring."

Grimes looked up from that morning's copy of the *Daily Messenger* and smiled.

"I can't do it now, my boy. You'll have to wait till to-morrow morning."

"How on earth did you find that bloodstain on the cellar opening?"

Digitized by Google

"I didn't find it, my boy."

"Who told you it was there, then?" asked Wilkins.

"Nobody. Look here, don't ask me any more questions. Come to the office to-morrow morning at seven o'clock and I'll tell you the name of the man that murdered Waring. I won't say another word till then."

"But I want to get it into the *Messenger* to-morrow morning," urged Wilkins.

"The *Messenger* will have to do just as you will have to do—wait," said Grimes.

Bright and early in the morning, Wilkins hastened to the *News* office. The front door was open but there was no one in. Wilkins walked back to the door leading into the press room and opened it.

He started back with a cry of horror, for in a chair in front of the door sat Simon Grimes. There was a gaping wound in his left breast, and in his right hand was a long dagger dripping with blood. It was a clear case of suicide. The body was still warm, but life was extinct.

Wilkins made sure that the old editor was dead before giving the alarm. When the astonished inhabitants crowded in there was a perfect bedlam of noise. Wilkins was the only cool man in the lot. He laid the body out on the floor and closed the dead man's eyes.

As he folded the dead man's hands across the breast, he saw a note in one of them. Taking it from the stiffened fingers Wilkins saw that it was addressed to him.

He walked into the front office, and while the crowd waited he read it to himself.

"I killed Colonel Waring," ran the note. "I have been editing the *News* for more than twenty years, and I have always tried to make it a good local newspaper. You, William Wilkins, after learning your profession under me, come back after a few years of city life and taunt me with your superior ability. You ridicule the country editor's business and make sport of country papers. I believe the country editor is the peer of the town editor, and the country newspaper a mightier engine of right than the city newspaper with its columns of sickening details of crime.

"In your metropolitan egotism you cast reflections upon me and my profession, and I sought to show you that you were a cad; that you were not such a great newspaper man as you imagined yourself to be. How could I do it?

"The question bothered me until the night of Colonel Waring's reception in your honour. Just as I was ready to leave the house it flashed through my mind.

"I went out of the front door, but entered again by the back door and made my way to the library unobserved. The rest you know. The knife that killed Waring is in my hand. With that knife I vindicated the honour of country journalism and humbled the pride of a haughty metropolitan journalist.

"People will say that I was crazy. That is not true. I only offered my life as a sacrifice for the honour of my profession."

Wilkins silently handed the note to one of those present and hastened to the telegraph office.

"Poor crazy fellow!" muttered Wilkins.

But the special representative of the London paper did not feel particularly proud of the figure he cut in the Waring murder mystery.

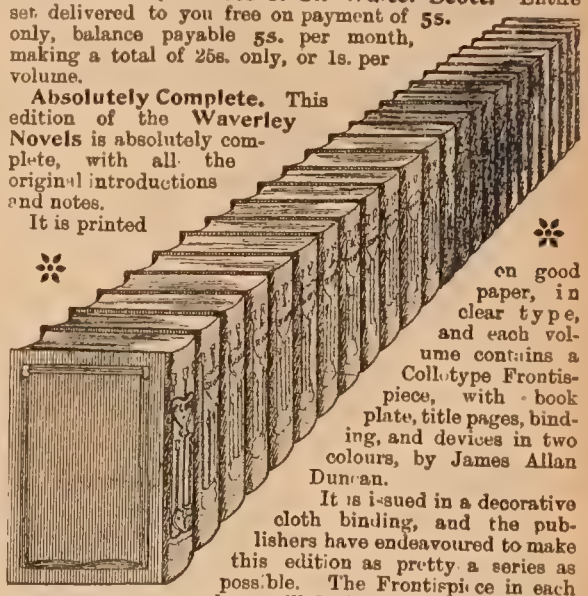
W. MAUDSLEY.

The Pearson Idea

Is to give the public the most and best for the smallest; in other words, to give them high-class literature, and plenty of it, for a small sum.

A SHELF FULL OF BOOKS FOR 5s.

Our latest sensation in the way of cheap literature is our edition of the **Romances of Sir Walter Scott.** Entire set delivered to you free on payment of **5s.** only, balance payable **5s.** per month, making a total of 25s. only, or 1s. per volume.



Absolutely Complete. This edition of the **Waverley Novels** is absolutely complete, with all the original introductions and notes.

It is printed on good paper, in clear type, and each volume contains a Collotype Frontispiece, with book plate, title pages, binding, and devices in two colours, by James Allan Duncan.

It is issued in a decorative cloth binding, and the publishers have endeavoured to make this edition as pretty a series as possible. The Frontispiece in each volume will depict the principal heroine of the volume in question, such as Rebecca of "Ivanhoe," or Flora Melvor of "Waverley." The series consists of Twenty-five Volumes.

The cheapness, combined with the generous style of this series should render it an event to all lovers of class fiction, who ought certainly to find in it the edition of Scott which combines most advantages, including that of being the cheapest artistic edition ever published

LIST OF VOLUMES:

Ivanhoe; Waverley; Guy Mannering; Old Mortality; Rob Roy; The Antiquary; The Heart of Midlothian; The Monastery; The Abbot; Kenilworth; The Pirate; Peveril of the Peak; The Bride of Lammermoor; The Legend of Montrose and Black Dwarf; The Fortunes of Nigel; Quentin Durward; St. Ronan's Well; Red Gauntlet; The Betrothed and Highland Widow; The Talisman; Woodstock; The Fair Maid of Perth; Anne of Geierstein; The Surgeon's Daughter and Castle Dangerous; Count Robert of Paris.

14,000 PAGES OF READING FOR 5s.

MONTHLY PAYMENT ORDER FORM.

The Publisher, C. Arthur Pearson, Limited, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C.

PLEASE send me the twenty-five volumes of the **Waverley Novels**, carriage paid, as advertised by you. I inclose 5s., and agree to make my next payment of 5s. when I receive the twenty-five volumes, and my succeeding payments on the corresponding day of each month following. Until I have paid you the whole 25s., I engage that the volumes, not being my property, shall not be disposed of by sale or otherwise.

*Signed*_____

*Address*_____

Digitized by Google

AN ODD IMPRISONMENT.

I AM a young physician of limited practice and great ambition. At the time of the incidents I am about to relate my house in London was shared, greatly to my own pleasure and convenience, by a clever young German whose acquaintance I had made in the hospital, and to whom I had become, in the one short year in which we had practised together, most unreasonably attached.

I say unreasonably, because it was a liking for which I could not account even to myself, as he was neither especially prepossessing in appearance, nor gifted with any too great amiability of character. He was, however, a brilliant theorist, and an unquestionably reliable practitioner; and for these reasons, probably, I entertained for him a profound respect and, as I have already said, a hearty and spontaneous affection.

As our specialities were the same, and as, moreover, they were of a nature which did not call for night work, we usually spent the evening together. But once I failed to join him, and it is of this night I have to tell.

I had been to Ealing, for my heart was sore over the trouble I had had with Dora, and I was resolved to make one final effort towards reconciliation. But, alas for my hopes, she was not at home, and what was worse, I soon learnt that she was going to sail the next morning for Madeira, where some relations of hers were staying.

This news, coming as it did without warning, affected me seriously, for I knew if she escaped from my influence at this time I should certainly lose her for ever, for the gentleman concerning whom we had quarrelled was a much better man for her than I, and almost equally in love. However, her father, who had always been my friend, did not look upon this same gentleman's advantages with as favourable an eye as she did, and when he heard I was in the house, he came hurrying into my presence with excitement written in every line of his fine face.

"Ah, Dick, my boy," he exclaimed joyfully, "how opportune this is! I was wishing you would come, for do you know Appleby has taken passage on board the same steamer as Dora, and if he and she go together, they will certainly come to an understanding, and that will not be fair to you or pleasing to me, and I do not care who knows it."

I gave him one look, and sank quite overwhelmed into the seat nearest me. Appleby was the name of my rival, and I quite agreed with her father that the *tête-à-têtes* afforded by an ocean voyage would surely put an end to the hopes which I had so long and so secretly cherished.

"Does she know he is going? Did she encourage him?" I stammered.

But the old man answered generally:

"Oh, she knows, but I cannot say anything positive about her having encouraged him. The fact is, Dick, she still holds a soft place in her heart for you, and if you were going to be of the party——"

"Well?"

"I think you would come off conqueror yet."

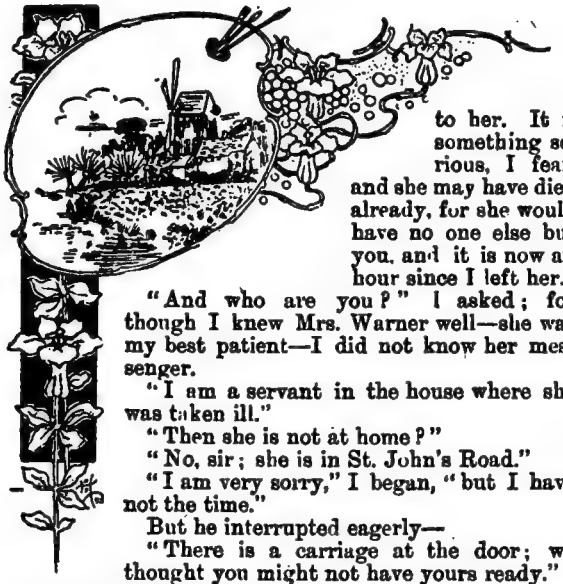
"Then I will be of the party," I cried. "It is only six now and I can be back at my place at seven. That gives me five hours before midnight, time enough in which to arrange my plans, see Richter, and make everything ready for sailing in the morning."

It seemed wild, this scheme, but I determined to pursue it. I loved Dora too much to lose her, and if three weeks' absence would procure me the happiness of my life, why should I hesitate to avail myself of the proffered opportunity? I rode on air as the train I had taken shot from station to station, and by the time I had arrived at Paddington my plans were all laid and my time disposed of till midnight.

It was, therefore, with no laggard step that I hurried home, nor was it with any ordinary feelings of impatience that I found Richter out; for this was not his usual hour for absenting himself, and I had much to tell him and many instructions to give. It was my first check, and I was fuming over it, when I saw what looked like a package of books lying on the table before me, and, though it was addressed to my partner, I was about to take it up, when I heard my name uttered in a tremulous tone, and turning, saw a man standing in the doorway who, the moment I met his eye, advanced into the room, and said:

"Oh! doctor, I have been waiting for you an hour; Mrs. Warner has been taken very bad, sir, and she prays that you will not delay a moment before coming

Digitized by Google



to her. It is something serious, I fear, and she may have died already, for she would have no one else but you, and it is now an hour since I left her."

"And who are you?" I asked; for though I knew Mrs. Warner well—she was my best patient—I did not know her messenger.

"I am a servant in the house where she was taken ill."

"Then she is not at home?"

"No, sir; she is in St. John's Road."

"I am very sorry," I began, "but I have not the time."

But he interrupted eagerly—

"There is a carriage at the door; we thought you might not have yours ready."

I had noticed the carriage.

"Very well," said I, "I will go; but first let me write a line."

"Oh, sir," the man broke in pleadingly, "do not wait for anything. She is really very bad, and I heard her calling for you as I ran out of the house."

"She had her voice, then," I ventured, somewhat distrustful of the whole thing, and yet not knowing how to refuse the man, especially as it was absolutely necessary to see Mrs. Warner that night and get her consent to my departure before I could think of making further plans.

So, leaving word for Richter to be sure and wait for me if he came home before I did, I signified to Mrs. Warner's messenger that I was ready to go with him, and immediately took a seat in the carriage which had been provided for me. The man at once jumped up on the box beside the driver, and before I could close the carriage door we were off.

As we went the thought came, "What if Mrs. Warner will not let me off?" But I dismissed the fear at once, for this patient of mine was an extremely unselfish woman, and if she were not too ill to grasp the situation would certainly sympathise with the strait I was in and consent to accept Richter's services in place of my own, especially as she knew and trusted him.

When the carriage stopped it was already dark, and I could distinguish little of the house I entered, save that it was large and old, and did not look like an establishment where a man-servant would be likely to be kept.

"Is Mrs. Warner here?" I asked of the man, who was slowly getting down from the box.

"Yes, sir," he answered quickly, and I was about to ring the bell before me when the door opened and a young German girl, curtseying slightly, welcomed me in, saying:

"Mrs. Warner is upstairs, sir, in the front room, if you please."

Not doubting her, but greatly astonished at the barren aspect of the place she was in, I stumbled up the faintly-lighted stairs before me and entered the great front room. It was empty, but through an open door at the other end I heard a voice saying, "He has come, madam." And anxious to see my patient, whose presence in this desolate house I found it harder and harder to understand, I stepped into the room where she presumably lay.

Alas, for my temerity in doing so! for no sooner had I crossed the threshold than the door by which I had entered closed with a click unlike any I had ever heard before; and when I turned to see what it meant, another click came from the opposite side of the room, and I perceived, with a benumbed sense of wonder, that the one person whose somewhat shadowy figure I had encountered on entering had vanished from the place, and that I was shut up alone in a room without visible means of egress.

This was startling and hard to believe at first, but after I had tried the door by which I had entered, and found it securely locked, and then bounded to the other side of the room, and tried the opposite one with the same result, I could but acknowledge I was caught.

What did it mean? Caught! and I was in haste—mad haste! Filling the room with my cries, I shouted for help and a quick release, but my efforts were, naturally, fruitless, and after exhausting myself in vain I stood still and surveyed, with what equanimity was left me, the appearance of the dreary place in which I had thus suddenly become entrapped.

It was a small, square room, and I shall not soon forget with what a foreboding shudder I observed that its four blank walls were literally unbroken by a single window, for this told me I was not in communication with the street, and that it would be impossible for me to summon help from the outside world.

The single gas-jet yet burning in a fixture hanging from the ceiling was the only relief given to the eye in the blank expanse of white wall that surrounded me, while as to furniture the room could boast of nothing more than an old-fashioned black walnut table and two chairs, the latter cushioned but stiff in the back and generally dilapidated in appearance.

The only sign of comfort about me was a tray that stood on the table, containing a couple of bottles of wine and two glasses. The bottles were full and the glasses clean, and, to this appearance of hospitality, a box of cigars rested invitingly near, which I could not fail to perceive, even at the first glance, was of the very best brand.

Astonished at these tokens of consideration for my welfare, and confounded by the prospect which they offered of a lengthy stay in this place, I gave another great shout, but to no better purpose than before. Not a voice answered, and not a stir was heard in the house.

But there came from without the sound of suddenly moving wheels, as if the carriage which I had left standing before the door had slowly rolled away. If this were so, then I was indeed a prisoner, while the moments so necessary to my plans, and perhaps to the securing of my whole future happiness, were flying by like the wind.

As I realised this, and my own utter helplessness, I fell into one of the chairs before me in a state of perfect despair. Not that any fears for my life were disturbing me, though one in my situation might well question if he would ever again breathe the open air, from which he had been so ingeniously lured.

I did not in that first moment of utter downhearted-

Digitized by Google

ness so much as inquire for the reason of the trick which had been played upon me. No, for my heart was full of Dora, and I was asking myself if I were destined to lose her after all, and that through no lack of effort on my part, but just because a party of thieves or blackmailers had thought fit to play a game with my liberty.

It could not be, there must be some mistake about it. It was some great joke, or I was the victim of a dream, or suffering from some hideous nightmare. Why, only half-an-hour before I was in my own house, among my own familiar belongings, and now—but alas, it was no delusion. Only four blank, whitewashed walls met my inquiring eyes, and though I knocked and knocked again upon the two doors which guarded me on either side, hollow echoes continued to be the only answer I received.

Had the carriage, then, taken away the two persons I had seen in this house, and was I indeed alone in its great emptiness? The thought made me desperate, but notwithstanding this, I was resolved to continue my efforts, for I might be mistaken; there might yet be some being left who would yield to my entreaties if they were backed by something substantial.

Taking out my watch I laid it on the table; it was just 7.45. Then I emptied my trousers pockets of whatever money they held, and when all was heaped up before me I could count but £3, which, together with my studs and a seal ring which I wore, seemed a paltry pittance with which to barter for the liberty of which I had been robbed.

But it was all I had with me, and I was willing to part with it at once, if only someone would unlock the door and let me go. But how make known my wishes, even if there were anyone to listen to them? I had already called in vain, and there was no bell.

Yes, there was; why had I not seen it before? There was a bell, and I sprang to ring it. But just as my hand fell on the cord I heard a gentle voice behind my back saying, in good English, but with a strong foreign accent:

"Put up your money, Mr. Atwater; we do not want your money, only your society. Allow me to beg you to replace both watch and money."

Wheeling about in my double surprise at the presence of this intruder, and his unexpected acquaintance with my name, I encountered the smiling glance of a middle-aged man of gentlemanly appearance and courteous manners. He was bowing almost to the ground, and was, as I instantly detected, of German birth and education, a gentleman, and not the blackleg I had every reason to expect to see.

"You have made a slight mistake," he was saying; "it is your society, only your society that we want."

Astonished at his appearance, and exceedingly irritated at his words, I stepped back as he offered me my watch and bluntly cried:

"If it is my society only that you want, you certainly have taken very strange means to procure it. A thief could have set no neater trap, and if it is money you want, state your sum and let me go, for my time is valuable, and my society likely to be unpleasant."

He gave a shrug with his shoulders that in no wise interfered with his set smile.

"You choose to be facetious," he observed. "I have already remarked that we have no use for your money. Will you sit down? Here is some excellent wine, and if this brand of cigars does not suit you I will send for another."

"Send for the hangman!" I cried, greatly exasperated. "What do you mean by keeping me in this place against my will? Open that door and let me out, or ——"

I was ready to spring, and he saw it. Smiling more atrociously than ever, he slipped behind the table, and before I could reach him had quietly drawn a revolver, which he cocked before my eyes.

"You are excited," he remarked, with a suavity that nearly drove me mad. "Now, excitement is no aid to good company, and I am determined that none but good company shall be in this room to-night. So, if you will be kind enough to calm yourself, Mr Atwater, you and I may yet enjoy ourselves; but if not——"

The action he made was significant, and I felt the cold sweat break out on my forehead through all the heat of my indignation. But I did not mean to show him that he had intimidated me.

"Excuse me," said I, "and put down your revolver. Though you are making me lose irredeemable time, I will try to control myself enough to give you an opportunity for explaining yourself. Why have you entrapped me into this place?"

"I have already told you," said he, gently laying the weapon before him, but in easy reach of his hand.

"But that is preposterous," I began, fast losing my self-control again. "You do not know me, and if you did?"

"Pardon me, you see I know your name."

Yes, that was true, and the fact set me thinking. How did he know my name? I did not know him, nor did I know this house or any reason for which I could have been beguiled into it. Was I the victim of a conspiracy, or was the man mad? Looking at him very earnestly I said:

"My name is Atwater, and so far you are right; but in learning that much about me you must have also learnt that I am neither rich nor influential, or of any special value to a blackmailer. Why choose me out, then, for your society? Why not choose someone who can talk?"

"I find your conversation very interesting."

Baffled, exasperated almost beyond my power to restrain myself, I shook my fist in his face, notwithstanding I saw his hand fly to his revolver.

"Let me go!" I shrieked. "Let me go out of this place! I have business, I tell you—important business which means everything to me, and which if I do not attend to to-night will be lost to me for ever. Let me go and I will so far reward you that I will speak to no one of what has taken place here to-night, but go my way, forgetful of you, forgetful of this house, forgetful of all connected with it."

"You are very good," was his quiet reply, "but this wine has to be drunk." And he calmly poured out a glass while I drew back in despair. "You do not drink wine?" he queried, holding up the glass he had filled between himself and the light. "It is a pity, for it is of most rare vintage. But perhaps you smoke?"

Sick and disgusted, I found a chair and sat down in it. If the man were crazy there was certainly method in his madness. Besides, he had not a crazy eye; there was calm calculation in it, and not a little good nature. Did he simply want to detain me, and if so, did he have a motive it would pay me to fathom before I exerted myself further to insure my release? Answering the wave he made me with his hand, by reaching out for the bottle and filling myself a glass, I forced myself to speak more affably, as I remarked:

"If the wine must be drunk, we had better set about

it, as you cannot mean to detain me more than an hour, whatever reason you may have for wishing my society."

He looked at me inquiringly before answering; then tossing off his glass, he remarked:

"I am sorry, but in an hour a man can scarcely make the acquaintance of another man."

"Then you mean——"

"To know you thoroughly, if you will be so good, I may never have the opportunity again."

He must be mad—nothing else but mania could account for such words and for such actions—and yet, if mad, why was he allowed to enter my presence? The man who brought me here, the woman who received me at the door, had not been mad.

"And I must stay here?" I began.

"Until I am quite satisfied. I am afraid that will take until morning."

I gave a cry of despair, and then, in my utter desperation, spoke up to him as I would to a man of feeling.

"You don't know what you are doing; you don't know what I shall suffer by such cruel detention. This night is not like other nights to me. This is a special night in my life, and I need it—I need it, I tell you—to spend as I will.

"The woman I love"—it seemed horrible to speak of her in this place, but I was wild at my helplessness, and madly hoped that I might awake some answering chord in a breast which could not be devoid of all feeling, or he would not have the benevolent look in his eye—"the woman I love," I repeated, "sails for Madeira tomorrow. We have quarrelled, but she still cares for me, and if I can sail on the same steamer we will yet make up and be happy."

"At what time does this steamer start?"

"At nine in the morning."

"Well, you shall leave this house at eight. If you go directly to the steamer you will be in time."

"But—but," I panted, "I have made no arrangements. I shall have to go to my lodgings, write letters, get money—I ought to be there at this moment. Have you no mercy on a man who never did you wrong, and only asks to quit you and forget the precious hours you have made him lose?"

"I am sorry," he said. "It is certainly quite unfortunate, but the door will not be opened before eight. There is really no one in the house to unlock it."

"And do you mean to say," I cried, aghast, "that you could not open that door if you would, that you are locked here as well as I, and that I must remain here till morning, no matter how I feel or you feel?"

"Will you not take a cigar?" he asked.

Then I began to see how useless it was to struggle, and visions of Dora leaning on the steamer rail, with that serpent whispering soft entreaties in her ear, came rushing before me until I could have wept in my jealous chagrin.

"It is cruel, base, vile," I began. "If you had the excuse of wanting money and took the opportunity of wringing my all from me, I could have patience; but to entrap and keep me here for nothing, when my whole future happiness is trembling in the balance, is the work of a fiend, and——" I made a sudden pause, for a strange idea had struck me.

What if these men and this woman were in league with him whose rivalry I feared, and whom I intended to supplant on the morrow. It was a wild surmise, but was it any wilder than to believe I was held here for a mere whim, a freak, a joke, as this bowing, smiling man before me would have me believe?

Rising in fresh excitement, I struck my hand on the table.

"You want to keep me from going on the steamer!" I cried. "That other wretch who loves her has paid you."

But that other wretch could not know that I was meditating any such unusual scheme as following him without a full day's warning. I thought of this even before I had finished my sentence, and did not need the blank astonishment in the face of the man before me to convince me that I had given utterance to a foolish accusation. "It would have been some sort of motive for your actions," I humbly added as I sank back from my hostile action. "Now you have nothing."

I thought he bestowed upon me a look of quiet pity, but if so he soon hid it with his uplifted glass.

"Forget the girl," said he. "I know of a dozen just as pretty."

I was too indignant to answer.

"Women are the bane of life," he now sententiously exclaimed. "They are ever intruding themselves between a man and his happiness, as, for instance just now between yourself and this good wine."

I caught up the bottle in sheer desperation.

"Don't talk of them," I cried, "and I will try and drink. I almost wish there was poison in this glass. My death here might bring punishment upon you."

He shook his head, totally unmoved by my passion.

"We deal punishment, not receive it. It would not worry me in the least to leave you lying here upon the floor."

I did not believe that, but I did not stop to weigh the question then. I was too much struck by a word he had used.

"Deal punishment," I repeated. "Are you punishing me? Is that why I am here?"

He laughed, and held his glass to mine.

"You enjoy being sarcastic," he observed. "Well, it gives a spice to conversation, I own. Talk is apt to be dull without it."

For reply, I struck the glass out of his hand. It fell and shivered, and he looked for the moment really distressed.

"I would rather you had struck me," he remarked, "for I have an answer for an injury like that; but for a broken glass——" He sighed and looked dolefully at the pieces on the floor.

Mortified and somewhat ashamed, I put down my own glass.

"You should not have exasperated me," I cried, and walked away beyond temptation to the other side of the room.

His spirits had received a damper, but in a few minutes he seized a cigar and began smoking. As the wreaths curled over his head he began to talk, and this time it was on subjects totally foreign to myself and even to himself.

It was good talk—that I recognised, though I hardly listened to what he said. I was asking myself what time it had now got to be, and what was the meaning of my incarceration, till my brain became weary and I could scarcely distinguish the topic he discussed.

But he kept on, for all my seeming and, indeed, real indifference—kept on hour after hour in a monologue he endeavoured to make interesting, and which probably would have been so if the time and occasion had been fit for my enjoying it

Digitized by Google

As it was I had no ear for his choicest phrases, his subtlest criticisms, or his most philosophic disquisitions. I was wrapped up in self and my cruel disappointment, and when, in a sudden excess of frenzy, I leapt to my feet and took a look at the watch still lying on the table and saw it was four o'clock in the morning, I gave a groan of final despair, and throwing myself on the floor, gave myself up to the heavy sleep that mercifully came to relieve me.

I was roused by feeling a touch on my breast. Clapping my hand to the spot where I had felt the intruding hand, I discovered that my watch had been returned to my pocket. Drawing it out, I first looked at it, and then cast my eyes quickly about the room. There was no one with me, and the doors stood open between me and the hall. It was eight o'clock, as my watch had just told me.

That I rushed from the house, and took the shortest road to the steamer, goes without saying. I could not cross the ocean with Dora, but I might yet see her and tell her how near I came to giving her my company on that long voyage, which now would only serve to further the ends of my rival.

But when, after torturing delays and incredible efforts to pierce a throng that was equally determined not to be pierced, I at last reached the wharf, it was to behold her, just as I had fancied in my wildest moments, leaning on the rail of the ship and listening, while she abstractedly waved her hand to some friends below, to the words of the man who had never looked so handsome to me, or so odious as at this moment of his unconscious triumph.

Her father was near her, and from his eager attitude and rapidly wandering gaze, I saw he was looking for me. At last he spied me struggling aboard and immediately his face lighted up in a way which made me wish he had not thought it necessary to wait for my anticipated meeting with his daughter.

"Ah, Dick, you are late," he began effusively, as I put foot on deck.

But I waved him back, and went at once to Dora.

"Forgive me—pardon me," I incoherently said, as her sweet eyes rose in startled pleasure to mine.

"I would have brought you flowers; but I meant to sail with you, Dora. I tried to; but wretches—villains—prevented it, and—and——"

"Oh, it does not matter," she said, and then blushed, probably because the words sounded unkind. "I mean——"

But she could not say what she meant, for just then the bell rang for all visitors to leave the ship, and her father came forward, and, evidently thinking all was right between us, smiled benignantly in her face, gave her a kiss and me a wink, and disappeared in the crowd that was now going rapidly ashore.

I felt that I must follow; but I gave her one look and one squeeze of the hand, and then, as I saw her glances wander to his face, I groaned in spirit, and stammered some words of choking sorrow, and was gone before her embarrassment could let her speak words which I knew would only add to my grief, and make this hasty parting unendurable.

"Scared off by a frown? I wouldn't have believed it, Dick."

I shook my head, but could not tell him just then that it was not through any lack of pluck on my part that I had failed him.

When I left the dock I went straight to a restaurant, for I was faint as well as miserable, not having had any supper the night before or any breakfast this morning. But my cup of coffee choked me, and the roll and the eggs were more than I could face.

Rising impatiently, I went out. Was anyone more wretched than I was that morning, and could anyone nourish a more bitter grievance?

Should I let such an interference as I had received go unpunished? No; of that I was determined.

Turning aside from my former destination I went immediately to a police station, and when I had entered my complaint was astonished to see that all the officials had grouped about me and were listening to my words with the most startled interest.

"Was the man who came for you a German?" one asked. I said "Yes."

"And the man who stood guarding over you and entertained you with wine and cigars, was not he a German, too?"

I nodded acquiescence, and they at once began to whisper together; then one of them advanced to me and said:

"You have not been home, I understand; you had better come."

Astonished by his manner, I endeavoured to inquire what he meant, but he drew me away, and not till we were within a stone's throw of my house did he say:

"You must prepare yourself for a shock. The impertinences you suffered from last night were unpleasant, no doubt, but if you had been allowed to return home you might not now be deploring them in comparative peace and safety."

"What do you mean?"

"That your partner was not so fortunate as yourself. Look up at the house; what do you see there?"

A crowd, that is what I saw first; but he made me look higher, and then I perceived that the windows of my room, of our room, were shattered and blackened and part of the casement of one had been blown out.

"A fire!" I shrieked. "Poor Richter was smoking——"

"No, he was not smoking. He had no time for a smoke. An infernal machine burst in that room last night, and your friend was its wretched victim."

I never knew why my friend's life was made a sacrifice to the revenge of his fellow-countrymen. Though we had been intimate in the year we had been together, he had never talked to me of his country, and I had never seen him in company with one of his own nation.

But that he was a victim of some political revenge was apparent, for though it proved impossible to find the man who had detained me, the house was found and ransacked, and among other secret things was discovered the model of the machine which had been introduced into our room and which had proved so fatal to the man it was addressed to.

Why men who were so relentless in their purposes towards him should have taken such pains to keep me from sharing his fate is one of the anomalies in human nature which now and then awake our astonishment. If I had not lost Dora through my detention at their hands, I should look back upon that evening with sensations of thankfulness; as it is, I sometimes question if it would not have been better if they had let me take the chances.

Have I lost Dora? From a letter I received to-day I begin to think not.

Digitized by Google

The Bite of the Pichu-Guate.

Clearly Claudio was tired, and it took a deal to tire this big, rough-headed young Mexican. But it was not to be wondered at after his morning's work. The lambs in his barns are now five days old, and at that age a New Mexican lamb is smart enough in body and impish enough in mind to upset the most patient-minded man.

Then the mothers, whose age might have been expected to give them discretion, were as crazy as the lambs. To add to the worry, the snakes were beginning to come out of their winter nap.

The opening of May at the 8,000 feet altitude of San Miguel is rather early for these long sleepers; but the spring was unusually warm, and though none had been seen, yet there was no doubting their presence. The hungry sheep were wild for the tender blades of grass that began to show about the mouths of the prairie dogs' burrows, and nowhere else.

But in some burrows were other tenants than prairie dogs lying in the sunny mouths of the holes, and savagely resentful of interruption. Already that day Claudio had found three dead ewes, lying close beside a burrow, fearfully swollen, and upon the nose of each were two tiny black marks such as one might make with a tatting needle.

Late in the afternoon the ewes, with a chorus of strange whistles, went tearing and galloping over the hillside and disappearing over the brow of the ridge, as if the very wolves were after them.

Claudio started in pursuit, but the lambs hung at his heels, in spite of a bombardment of words and pebbles that he directed at them, and whenever he paused they pranced up to him and snuggled against his legs, and dropped contentedly at his very feet.

Pulling off his coat, Claudio swung it vigorously about him to clear a space, leapt over the backs of a few loiterers, and went running up the slope at a pace it was a wonder to see.

The coat dropped from his hand as he jumped a gully, and as the lambs came stumbling along several tripped on it, and finding it warm, promptly sprawled upon their knees and began to nurse at whatever rag or tag they first found. And the others, fancying that they were being robbed of their dinner, crowded and jostled about, butting, falling down, and clambering over one another.

Claudio might have laughed at the sight; but when he came back fifteen minutes later, he saw about the coat only a lot of little white patches, smeared with blood. Here and there a lamb was to be seen, wandering disconsolately about or fallen exhaustively over a shrub. And over the further hillside was just disappearing a big, dark, shambling figure with two white objects shining on it.

It was all plain enough. The ewes, scenting the bear from afar as he sneaked through the woods, had fled incontinently; for the actual presence of no other wild beast so terrifies sheep as the mere smell of a bear. And taking advantage of Claudio's brief absence, Bruin had sallied from the junipers, played havoc among the lambs (which were too stupid to fear even him), and were now making off with a couple "for future reference."

The bear, like bears always, was only anxious to get away, if he decently could, and ran his best. Ordinarily that would have been far better than Claudio's best—or a very fair horse's best, for that matter. But greediness is costly, even for bears. The lamb in his mouth was no handicap whatever; and having eaten two or three besides, he might have been contented with that.

But the one he persisted in carrying hugged under his forearm did seriously impede him. Even then, in the long run, he was more than a match for his pursuer. When Claudio came in full view of him and only a hundred yards behind, he whipped from his belt the revolver he carried in lieu of a rifle.

"Throwing down" in the swift, instinctive motion of those who really know how to use a revolver and never stop to ask whether it has sights or not, he sent a leaden proxy running for him. It was a good shot, tired and out of breath as he was, the kind of shooting one has to learn on the frontier, and cannot learn in a gallery.

The bear turned a complete somersault; and gathering itself again, began biting viciously at its rump.

Claudio had not stopped at all; but now, when he was within thirty yards, he halted and watched for the brute to give him a shot at a vital part. But at that very instant the bear, with a snuffle of rage, wheeled and came galloping at his late pursuer.

Claudio sent a square shot at the skull—not by any means under the impression that he could bore that sloping forehead, but hoping the rap might startle the

Digitized by Google

beast into rising, so that he could get a chance at the throat, the best of all shots at a bear. But the heavy ball merely ploughed a red furrow up the skull, and the bear came lurching on. It was worse than useless to run. Slender as was the chance of life now, it all lay in standing firm.

When it was within six feet, the huge brute reared upon his haunches, and, springing back a step, Claudio was bringing down his weapon like lightning to "let go" when it should be on a level with that mighty throat, now fully exposed. But the bear was no innocent; and cleverly judged as was Claudio's move he had met his match in quick wit. Even the sweep of his swift arm was slow beside the flash of that great paw as it swooped far forward, met his descending hand with a calculation an Indian eye might have envied, and sent the heavy revolver spinning forty feet, going off as it flew. And in another instant the shepherd was on his back, and the bear upon him.

The great claws had struck only the revolver, and Claudio's hand was unhurt, save where the violent wrenching of the trigger had cut and twisted his fingers; and instinctively he gripped deep in the thick fur where his hands first lighted. Neither had he been hurt by the fall, for here was soft grey sand—which a little relieved, too, the fearful pressure upon his legs. But none of these things comforted Claudio; and he fought only as a man fights blindly to the end. His last faint hope had gone when the revolver went whirling far beyond his reach.

The bear, which had gone to bed in his cave in the canyon of Acebache, rolling fat, in November, had but a few days ago come forth from that long nap, the shadow of his proper self. His long heavy fur was sadly rusty, and his huge frame lean as a rail. He had been interrupted in the first square meal he had enjoyed in five months, and from that long fast came two strange results.

One was, that he was not half himself in strength, and that the powerful young Mexican was therefore, something more that a puppet in his paws.

Of the end, certainly, there could be no doubt; but meantime Claudio wrestled mightily, and even succeeded in struggling to his feet hugging close, to give those paws no chance for one of the swipes that would make an egg-shell of his head. His face he snuggled into the bear's chest, and so kept clear of the dripping jaws. And despite the fearful pressure under which his ribs creaked and sprung, he hunched and tugged and swayed blindly and desperately, as if he were wrestling with some tall man whom he might hope to pitch at last. But it was not for long.

Finding the close quarters unsatisfactory, the bear brought up its muscular arm, and clapping its paw upon Claudio's mat of hair, forced his head resistlessly back. The great claws were buried in his scalp, and little streams of red spurted out. The bear's left arm was round his waist, while the right was giving him the "break hold" as scientifically as any wrestler could have done.

And now a villainous, warm breath came sickening in his face, and he could see the red jaws and white teeth within six inches. He even noticed, with that strange inconsequence which comes upon one in these moments, that blood from the scalp wound had run down and tinged the froth which dripped from that great mouth.

In a frenzy of terror he made a clutch under the throat, to hold back that terrible head, and the strongest man could scarce have bent against Claudio's desperate arms; but the big jaws, working grimly, drew nearer. A deadly faintness began to spread over him, and Claudio shut his eyes.

Just then a sudden jerk ran through the body of the bear, and there was a sharp snort as of rage and pain.

Claudio opened his eyes. He could see nothing but the demoniac face, but in it he fancied there was a new expression.

Then there was a sickening movement of the great claws which had sunk deep into his back and scalp. Surely they were relaxing!

Their withdrawal was far more painful than their entrance had been; but even with the faintness of the new pain, a sudden wave of joy swept through the shepherd—for the first time, now, he hoped, though he knew not why.

He shook his head savagely to clear the blood which streamed down over his eyes (the paw had dropped from his scalp), and dug his fists into the deep furred throat, and fought with the strength of two Claudios—fighting no longer as a dying rat fights, but like a man for hope of life.

Then a very wonderful thing befel. The bear was groaning and panting heavily; and suddenly it lurched and fell to the ground, carrying Claudio with it. But it was no longer trying to get his head between its jaws. For a moment it lay upon him, writhing and grinding its teeth, and then flung itself to one side biting up a great mouthful of sand.

Claudio leapt to his feet, ran to his revolver, and fell upon it, crying like a child. It was ten minutes before he could get up, for the loss of blood—and, more than all, the frightful strain—had left him limp as a rag. At last he staggered to his feet, clutching the weapon, and walked unsteadily towards the bear.

Laying down his revolver he caught the heavy fur of the rump, to turn the bear over. Ordinarily he would have succeeded. Four hundredweight is no fool of a lump, but Claudio, as you have seen, was an uncommonly powerful young man. Now, however, worn out with his fearful struggle, and with nerves so unstrung that he trembled all over, it was too much for him.

Still the mystery would not let him rest; and hunching his shoulder against the bear's back, he ran his hand under, feeling for the wound. He groped and groped, but suddenly in a hollow felt the touch of something very different from fur or sand, and in the same instant an inconceivable pang. And when he jerked his arm away a tiny snake less than a foot long, grey-backed, an coppery on the stomach, was hanging from his thumb.

The last vestige of colour faded from the brown face and left it as grey as ashes between the drying streaks of blood—for Claudio knew the pichu-guate, the only real asp in the New World, the deadliest snake in North America.

So he had escaped the bear only to die by this tiny foe—for never yet had one been known to recover from the bite of the pichu-guate. A rattlesnake was nothing; but this, well see what it had done for such a monster as the bear, and in the space of less than a minute!

Evidently in their struggle. Brain had stepped too close to this unsuspecting danger—that great lump on his hind leg explained all. Had he carried his usual coat of fat, the venom would have taken far longer to operate, and he would have had abundant time to settle accounts with Claudio. But he no longer looked gaunt.

Digitized by Google

He was still swelling—already he looked fat, as if July were here.

Claudio was reeling. Fearful pains shot up his arm and went forking through his body. Upon the thumb were only two black dots, right at the tip, but the hand in these five seconds had become double its size. If he could only cut it off! But alas! his knife was in his coat—and before he could get half-way to that he would be a dead shepherd.

All this had taken not so long as it has for you to read it—nay, scarce the time in which one might spell the longest word in it; for in these crises things and thoughts move swiftly, and one lives fast.

Claudio was still squeezing his thumb and crying aloud for a knife, when his eye lit on the revolver. Quick as a flash he sprang and caught it up and cocked it. There was just one cartridge left.

His nerves were steady now. He held his hand arm's length before him, the wounded thumb erect; drew the revolver back right up to his eye, that the ball might not mangle too much, and thus stop the blood, which must flow; and with a hand as firm as if it had been carved of stone, pulled the trigger.

There was a dull, numb sensation, hardly a pain in all that side, and when the smoke cleared from his eyes, his right hand was black and bleeding. The thumb was gone clean at the lower joint.

There is one man in New Mexico who has been bitten by the pichu-guate and lives to tell of it—a tall, powerful, good-natured shepherd, with four grim grey furrows in his hair, and the thumb of the right hand missing. But Claudio seems rather proud of these disfigurements, and often says:

"Who talks of bargain? For so cheaply I bought my life twice in an hour."

H. R. Bentley.

One of the new schools, that which does not permit of the use of adjectives which do not date back to the thirteenth century, claims that the young widows were buried with Scribes. This claim, however, is totally without foundation, as the statistics will triumphantly show.

What I know is that there was still one a short distance from here not long ago in a hotel of the Rue Nonceau—a hotel ten metres square, entirely hidden by a clematis vine. Her name was Louise and the marriage ceremony had made her the Comtesse de Viry.

The Comtesse was twenty-two years of age. Her principal accessory was a little white and curly dog, the sole nourishment of which consisted of a lump of sugar in the morning and a biscuit in the evening. This dog's name was Bally.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon. Louise was skimming along the gravelled walk in the garden, circling about the rose bushes like a butterfly, and pausing from time to time to breath through her pink nostrils the delicate perfume of a newly-blown flower.

Bally, full of joy, was pursuing his mistress with merry barks; he seized with all his teeth the ounce of the blue muslin dress, which Louise seemed to have cut out of a rainbow, and, propping himself on his claws, pulled away to the full extent of his strength.

It was at the height of these amusements that M Jacques de Beauchamp entered the garden. The little widow, on perceiving him, hid herself behind an orange bush, but Jacques ran to her, and, surprising her, kissed her on the forehead.

"Oh, M. de Beauchamp!" cried she, "that's really too bad."

Louise was of medium height. How well she bore her title of widow, and in a way to do herself honour. The young girl is generally timid and stupid. She blushes, following her mother's directions, at a word that is said to her, and always lowers her eyes at the proper moment, which is bad for those who don't like to study eyebrows. The widow, on the contrary, has the right to hear everything, and when one talks to her of love she, at least, knows what love means.

Louise leant on the arm of M. de Beauchamp and they went into the parlour, followed by Bally, who cast jealous glances upon his mistress's suitor.

Louise and Jacques made a fine pair and the marriage was settled. Still, they had each a defect: M. de Beauchamp was jealous and Mdme. de Viry was a coquette.

"Louise," said he to her, "you fill me with despair. You say that you love me; that confession has come from your cherry lips; but how can I believe you when

Digitized by Google

you smile on everybody? You have too kind a reception for the first man who comes along, and when I see you in Society, lively, vivacious, and gay, always laughing heartily in the midst of a circle of eager flatterers, it is impossible for me to say what tortures and agonies I endure."

"What can be done, my friend?" responded Louise. "I am gay, that is true; but is that a crime? And why should I snub men who approach me, and say things agreeable to be heard?"

"You are a coquette, and your laughter completes my despair, for if you laugh thus persistently it is only to show your teeth. You know how adorable you are when, laughing affectedly, you display your snowy throat by throwing back your head."

"But what must I do to prove my love to you? It's distracting; that's the whole of it. Ask of me what you will, but don't ask me not to laugh."

M. de Beauchamp assumed a solemn air.

"You told me one evening," said he, "that you would sacrifice your life for me. I do not ask so much as that of you; but, you see, will you make me the happiest of men?"

"You have but to speak."

"Even at the price of suffering?"

"Even at that price."

"Well, make me the sacrifice of one of your teeth."

"Do you know what you're asking? It's a piece of barbarity."

"A single tooth—the very smallest—in front, and afterwards you can laugh as much as you please."

"But you'll think me ugly. You won't have anything more to do with me!"

"I swear to you that there is no other means of assuring my happiness!"

The Comtesse rang.

Saint-Jean, her valet de chambre, took her order and returned, a quarter of an hour later, followed by a gentleman who carried a box of instruments.

"Who is that person?" demanded M. de Beauchamp.

The little Comtesse answered:

"He is Mr. James the English dentist."

The little Comtesse passed into her boudoir, Bally followed her with drooping tail, as becomes a dog when it is aware that something grave is about to happen.

Louise returned a little later, ashamed and humiliated, and handed M. de Beauchamp a small tooth as white as milk, which the latter raised to his lips and covered with kisses. Then she fled and shut herself up in her chamber.

Jacques had the tooth framed in a tiny medallion and wore it religiously about his neck like a sainted relic.

From that day on the little Comtesse was so gloomy that they took her for a nun. Very rarely did even a faint smile light up her countenance like a furtive ray of sunshine during the rain. She fled from Society, and when by chance she ventured into it she was soon apart seated in a corner, as serious as an owl, with her mouth shut as closely as a prison door.

Jacques no longer recognised her, and, to tell the truth, she was unrecognisable.

"The poor Comtesse is ageing," said malevolent people. "She has greatly changed; she is as solemn as a funeral procession."

And Jacques felt his love flowing away drop by drop, like the water from a vase of flowers.

He realised that what he had loved in her were, above all things, her smiles, her sprightliness, and her gaiety. And he also grew gloomy. Then he made efforts to retain his fleeting love; then he sought to reason with himself and intoxicate his brain, but only the more did he realise that he himself had slain his passion.

One day he reached Mdme. de Viry's house in a state of complete desperation.

"Louise," he said as he cast himself at her feet, "do you still love me?"

"I have sworn to love you always," answered she.

"Will you prove to me the sincerity of your word?"

"I ask nothing better."

"Well, if you love me have your tooth put back."

"What folly is this?" said Louise, weeping. "I told you that you would love me no longer. You're just like all the rest of the men. And yet they reproach we women with being capricious."

"Louise, I supplicate you to pardon me. I revile my blindness—my idiocy."

"So you deplore the weakness with which I consented to yield to your caprice?"

"I am filled with sorrow, tortured by remorse beyond endurance."

"You admit the cruelty of your exaction?"

"I shall reproach myself with it until the day of my death."

"You would have been happy had I disobeyed you?"

"I would give anything, no matter what, had you done so."

The little Comtesse gave a hearty laugh, which disclosed all her teeth, not one of them was missing.

"What does this mean?" demanded M. de Beauchamp, turning about with his fingers the medallion in which was encrusted like a sainted relic, the little pearl of sacrifice.

The Comtesse opened Bally's pouting lips, saying as she did so:

"Behold the victim."

"Ah," cried M. Beauchamp, "you never loved me, Louise, I see it plainly now. You never loved me."

They never married.

C. SUTHERLAND.

Now, Mr. Smith, is the Time to Try for One of Pearson's Fivers!

THE Editor of *Pearson's eekly* is offering five £5 notes to all those named Smith. Applications must be made on post-cards addressed to the "Note Editor" of *Pearson's Weekly*, and must reach the office of that paper by November 12th at latest.

Of course it may happen that the note is not addressed to you at all; on the other hand, it may be that your name is lying in the editorial safe in an envelope containing one of those crisp and crackling £5 notes, the possession of which makes life so pleasant.

WE all admit that marriage is a lottery, but we are also all convinced that we know t e lucky combination.

HAL COUNTER: "So she did not accept you?"

Sam Shoeseller: "No—got down on my knees to propose—then forgot what I was there for and asked her what size shoe she wore."

Digitized by Google

THE FINAL WAR

BY

LOUIS TRACY.

Author of "The Shadow Hand," "An American Emperor," "The Lost Provinces," etc.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A Stab at Russia.

A hundred miles in twenty hours is not a bad performance over such a country as Afghanistan, even if the road be a good one like that which links Chaman with Kandahar.

Both men and horses were weary when Captain Peyton announced that they would make their first prolonged halt on a wooded slope which commanded a view of the famous Afghan city.

Under the peculiar conditions of travel all distinctions of rank disappeared in this small party. The leader attended to his two chargers as zealously and thoroughly as did the junior Sikh jemadar, and by rapid arrangement Englishmen and natives equally divided the other duties of the bivouac. The unusual circumstances of their yet unknown mission rendered it imperative that self-help and equality of labour should be the order of the day, and all shared alike in mounting guard, cutting wood, and the rest.

Culinary operations were the most difficult. The two Mussulmans necessarily ate by themselves, the Hindu soldier made shift to observe caste prejudices, and when dinner came to be thought of, Peyton and de Vismes gazed blankly at each other.

"Do you know anything about cooking?" said Peyton to his companion.

"Lots—theoretically."

"Ha!" The qualification sounded suspicious.

"I have learnt the names of various dishes in ten languages," explained de Vismes. "For instance, the Russian for Irish stew is——"

"Look here, old chap," broke in Peyton. "I will cut a double share of grass for the gees, if you will undertake the stew in any language you like."

"Agreed," cried de Vismes. "To-day it shall be Étuvée à la Kandahar."

A young goat which they had bought at a village for a few annas supplied the meat, and the Mohammedans had already secured some sweet potatoes, of which de Vismes obtained a share. Salt they had brought with them, and the result of an hour's assiduity produced an excellent meal and a liberal supply of grass-roots for the horses.

It was then that Peyton was able to open his sealed packet and learn the full extent of the task intrusted to him. An autograph letter from Sir George White was quite explicit.

"You will proceed," wrote the Commander-in-Chief, "with the utmost possible dispatch to Turbat-i-Shaikh-Janni, on the Herat Meshed road. There you will find Captain Adams of the 5th Lancers, who is awaiting you. If not he, Captain Hutchinson of the 2nd Gurkhas will be in his place. Should you arrive safely, either of these officers will acquaint you with the intentions of the Government of India. You will be in supreme command, and it is left to your discretion to act at the right moment. This you will easily determine when you have reached your destination.

"Communicate the contents of this letter to the British officer selected to accompany you, so that in the event of accident to yourself he may fulfil your mission. In the latter event the command at Turbat and during subsequent operations will be settled by seniority.

"Should it be an open question whether or not either of you can reach Turbat, your destination only must be told to the native officers in your party, so that if any one of them gain the desired end of the journey, the officer he meets will understand what has happened, and may be trusted to do what is best fitted in his judgment.

"The native officers should be individually instructed to deliver a message to that effect.

"When you have read this document to your companion, burn it. I inclose a sketch map of your best route, with all possible information marked thereon by the Intelligence Department, and you will also find herewith safe conducts signed by the Amir of Afghanistan and the Shah of Persia.

"You must allow neither your own life, nor the lives of your companions, nor of your opponents, to stand in the way of the accomplishment of this mission.

"I have only to wish you success, and to assure you of the keen appreciation that will be manifested by the Government of India, if you and your companions are able to fully carry out their desires."

Peyton read this remarkable document twice slowly, and then he called de Vismes, and went through it again, aloud.

"We seem to have got a tolerably tall order," was de Vismes' comment.

Digitized by Google

"Why do you think so?" said Peyton. "There surely need not be more than ordinary difficulty in getting through to Turbat-and-the-rest-of-it—unless——"

"Yes. Unless the Russians are already in the way. That's exactly what the chief expects; hence your burning the letter in case it should fall into their hands."

"The presence of a few sotnias of Cossacks between us and the frontier of Persia will certainly complicate matters," replied Peyton with a smile. "Meanwhile pass a cigar. I am going to burn this thing, and we must not waste matches."

"It seems to me," went on de Vismes thoughtfully, "that even when we reach Turbat the business is only beginning. We have got a great chance, old man. Let's have a look at the passports."

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

Peyton . . . went through it again aloud.

He examined the two documents whilst the cigar and the letter were being ignited. They were written in the Persi-Arabic character, which he readily deciphered. Then he laughed.

"These safeguards are typical of the men," he explained. "The Shah uses a lot of circumlocution and flowery phrases, and explains that we are engaged, so far as he knows, on a peaceful mission, the nature of which he doesn't state, but he enjoins all his servants to help us with food and forage for the horses if necessary. The Amir, on the other hand, comes to the point at once. Here is what he says: 'The bearer is my friend. He who refuses to assist him is my enemy. Signed,—ABDURRAHMAN KHAN.' Quite explicit, isn't it?"

"Yes, to those who know the ways of Kabul," said Peyton, and the two officers then carefully scrutinised the map. By travelling fifty miles a day, which would be a phenomenal performance in such country, they would be in Turbat-i-Shaikh-Janni in eight days. And the Cossacks were already in Herat—but this they did not learn until later.

Their second halt was at Maiwand.

The swiftly-flowing waters of the treacherous river, though sparkling and iridescent in the declining light of the hot May evening, did not fail to evoke bitter thoughts in the hearts of the Englishmen, whilst the natives condemned the stream in the choicest phrases of the Urdu language—a tongue particularly rich in the vocabulary of objurgation.

Indeed they were relieved to quit the place and its painful memories of British disaster when the first faint streaks of dawn gave light to show the road. Thence they crossed the Helmund at Haidrabad and took the direct if difficult route to Taiwarah.

By this means they hoped to gain Kuhsan on the Persi-Afghan frontier by an unfrequented road and without attracting undue observation.

Towards the close of the fourth day, whilst they were travelling rapidly through the valley of a tributary of the Farah-Rud river, one of the horses fell dead lame. He was stripped, his trappings thrown into a nullah, and turned loose, but the poor beast continued to hobble after them, and was not driven off until the rissalder had laid about him with a heelrope.

They halted in a tope of trees about a mile farther on, and as was their invariable custom, selected a spot which commanded a good view of the surrounding country.

Not expecting any immediate danger, they were about to kindle a fire when the Sikh uttered a warning cry, and at once the eyes of the whole party were riveted upon an irregular crowd of horsemen coming down the valley on the watershed of which they had bivouacked.

Peyton knew that he and his companions were hidden from observation by the trees, but as a precautionary measure the horses' girths were tightened again, and then the proceedings of the new-comers were watched with interest.

They did not long leave the British soldiers in doubt as to their identity.

"Cossacks from the Ural," whispered de Vismes. "I know their head-dress well, as I once lived among 'em for a month."

"Then the Russians are advancing on Kandahar," said Peyton. "Thank Heaven our fellows will be there to meet them!"

The enemy came momentarily nearer, and were evidently about to pass them at a distance of half a mile, close to the banks of the shallow river which ran north-west towards the Farah Rud.

"It's a jolly good job they don't go in for scouting on the hillsides," murmured Peyton. "Otherwise we should be in trouble."

The Cossacks had reached the nearest point to the concealed party when the unexpected happened. The discarded charger, who had made his way to the water, seeing a troop of horsemen, had cantered off to them on three legs, and whinnied his delight at again falling in with his own kind. Instantly the three native officers sprang to their blankets in order to smother the cries of any of their animals that might choose to give tongue in reply, but, old campaigners as they were, the other troop-horses were too busy with their feed to indulge in conversation.

The Cossacks halted at the somewhat singular encounter, and some of them dismounted to examine the prize. At once a great deal of gesticulation and excitement arose in their midst.

"They have found the regimental number on his hoof," growled De Vismes.

"Yes," said Peyton grimly. "We must spare no more lives," and he thought of the concluding words of the Commander-in-Chief's letter.

"It's a good job we didn't shoot him."

"True, but we might have stabbed him. I trust they won't find the saddlery."

Dismounted to examine the prize.

The Cossacks deliberated for some time and then pushed on rapidly southwards, whilst they now detached scouting parties on the hills.

"That was a close call," observed De Vismes, drawing a deep breath.

"Very. In half-an-hour's time we will drop over into the next street," said Peyton, meaning that they would traverse the ridge and try the neighbouring valley as a safer route.

Nothing happened that night or the next day when they crossed the track leading from Herat to Zulfikar. As the evening of the seventh day came on they cautiously, approached the Kuhsan Pass. Once safely through this they had only two days of hard riding before them, as they would be in Persian territory.

But although the goal was so near, Peyton resolved to leave nothing to chance.

The country was well wooded up to the mouth of the pass, so he halted his little company in a secluded spot some two miles distant from the cleft in the hills through which ran the caravan route, and sent Gurdal Singh forward on foot to reconnoitre.

The Sikh was absent three hours, and Peyton was becoming anxious; darkness came, and there was still no

Digitized by Google

sign of the jemadar. At last he returned, breathless but imperturbable.

"What news, jemadar?" said the Commander.

"Ill news, sahib," was the reply. "A hundred Cossacks are eating round their fires about a quarter of a mile from the pass, and a sentry is placed where the road enters the hills."

The annoyance and amazement of the two officers at these tidings were best signified by silence. At last Peyton said: "We must get through to-night."

"Of course," answered de Vismes. "But how? To attempt to rush it means death for the lot of us."

"We must think of some means," said the other, and he called to him Rissaldar Shah Nawaz Khan, who knew this part of the country thoroughly, having served on an escort for a boundary commission in the locality.

The Mohammedan, having questioned the Sikh, explained that the Cossacks were encamped on a piece of level ground on one side of a small stream which issued from the pass. It would be possible in the night to reach unobserved the entrance to the pass by the other side of the stream, crossing the water at the nearest point, and making a dash for the road.

But there was the sentry.

"Leave him to me," said Shah Nawaz Khan, with a complacent grin. "I have often crept into a keddah, sahib, when a boy, and thrown a noose round the leg of an elephant. A Cossack's neck is not nearly so thick."

"This sounds deuced like murder," said Captain Peyton in English. "Remember, Shah Nawaz Khan," he continued, "I would not have the man killed if it can be avoided. Can you disarm and gag him quietly?"

"Protector of the poor, it is done."

Shortly before midnight the five men, having selected the best of the horses, and hobbled the others to prevent them from following, reached the further side of the stream, whose noisy progress effectually drowned the sounds of the horses' feet. They cautiously examined the Cossack encampment, which was plainly visible in a flood of brilliant moonlight. They could also see the sentry, and whilst they were arranging their final plan of action the relief was effected.

"His hour has not come," murmured Shah Nawaz Khan to his compatriot, as they watched the Cossack whose turn of duty had expired returning to the bivouac.

An idea now occurred to Peyton. Not only must they get safely into the pass but the Cossacks must be sent off on the wrong scent, or the gagged sentry must soon be discovered and a pursuit established.

"Gurdal Singh," he said to the Sikh. "Take your horse and return. Cross the stream lower down, and in half-an-hour ride openly toward the encampment. Go as near as you can with safety, fire your carbine at them, yell as loud as you are able, and then do your best to escape. Here is a letter from the Amir if you fall in with any Afghans. You must endeavour to return to Kandahar and report our progress. I will see to it that you are rewarded."

"Salaam, sahib!" returned the Sikh gravely, and he led off his horse without another word.

At the same moment Shah Nawaz Khan slipped away into the shadows like a ghost, having divested himself of his boots and most of his clothing. He only carried a heel-rope and a knife.

A cloud passed over the moon, plunging the landscape into darkness, and for fifteen weary minutes the others waited in ill-sustained suspense.

Then a dark form crept up from the river bank and a gruff voice said:

"It is done, sahib. Give me a minute to clothe myself."

"Is he bound and gagged?" said Peyton, leaning towards the place where Shah Nawaz Khan was wriggling into his accoutrements.

"He is bound, sahib, but the gag slipped." Then, after a tug at a boot, the rissalder added. "Nevertheless he will not speak."

Peyton remembered the Commander-in-Chief's instructions and asked no more questions.

To cross the stream and quietly glide into the gloom of the pass was now an easy matter. This was hardly accomplished when a couple of rifle shots rang out in the still air in quick succession, and they could plainly hear the shouting of the Cossacks as they sprang to arms.

All armed and mounted.

Silently and doggedly the four soldiers urged on their tired horses. The ascent was short but steep. By two o'clock they were nearing the summit of the pass when they heard an unmistakable sound some distance in the rear. The crack of the Cossack whip, and cries of encouragement to animals as a party of pursuers rode after them, came up from the cavernous depths of the defile.

"They have found the sentry," said Peyton. "Only a few of them must have followed the Sikh."

"Allah has permitted it," said Shah Nawaz Khan, "but the prophet himself could not make their sentry tell that which he saw."

Then the full and terrible significance of his orders came to Peyton's mind for the first time.

"You must remain here and bar the way as long as you can," he said to the two Mohammedans.

"It is done," they both replied.

Shah Nawaz Khan continued, without the slightest tremor in his voice: "I have a wife and three little ones in the cavalry bazaar at Shikarpur."

"My aged father and mother live at Delhi," said Jemadar Musa Khan, "and I send them a quarter of my pay every month."

"They shall not want whilst the Sirdar reigns," replied Peyton, choking down his emotion. "May God guard you!"

"Salaam, sahib," cried both men, and they dismounted.

The last that Peyton and de Vismes saw of them they were striving to prise a big rock into the middle of the narrow and precipitous mountain path, which here overhung a steep gorge.

The officers rode forward in silence, and in a little while they heard rapid firing in the rear. This continued in a desultory manner for some time, and then died away, but there appeared to be no further pursuit.

"The majority of those shots were from Lee-Metford carbines," said de Vismes.

"Well they might be," replied Peyton, who was bitter with grief at the loss of the two brave men he had been compelled to leave to certain death.

"The last shots certainly were," persisted the other.

"It is impossible that they should escape. Why, there were probably fifty Cossacks!"

"True, but the fifty don't know how many they are facing."

Further conversation was, however out of the question. The road in the descent became momentarily worse. Fortunately the sky had cleared again and the moonlight enabled them to pick their way, else they would inevitably have blundered down into the rocky abyss through which a new stream was now threading its way into Persia. Judging by the roar which came up out of the depths, there must be a considerable volume of water, and it was evident that several torrents, converging from other spurs in the hills, had here found a common channel.

Their horses were now almost dead beat, and they were practically in the same condition themselves, but they kept doggedly on until dawn came, and they neared the Persian

Digitized by Google

end of the defile. But who can picture their dismay, when, on emerging into a comparatively open valley, they plainly saw another Cossack encampment about a mile distant.

"Alikhanoff must have had some inkling of a counter move from Persia," said de Vismes. "He has evidently seized every caravan route."

"It is to stop supplies reaching our troops from this side," said Peyton. "There is nothing for it but to cross the river and try to escape towards the north before we are seen. It will be a nasty job, especially with horses so done up as ours are."

True enough, this was their only resource. Taking advantage of the cover of some trees they boldly advanced into the stream, and their chargers, freshened by the water dashing against their flanks, gallantly essayed the difficult passage.

In such a turbulent and fierce rushing current it was useless to dismount and cling to mane or tail. They must either gain the other side with comparative ease, or be swept away by the force of the swirling and eddying river.

For a few moments all went well. Then de Vismes' horse, slipping on a loose stone, plunged violently, rolled over, and Peyton saw animal and rider hurled headlong by the current into a vortex of foam. They disappeared momentarily, but he caught glimpses of them as they fought madly for life when they rose again many yards further on.

Horrified beyond expression he seemed to lose all muscular power, and would infallibly have met the same fate if his gallant Waler had not scrambled into safety on the opposite bank.

It was hopeless to think of helping de Vismes, or seeking for him. One of the five was left, and he still had sixty long miles before him.

Peyton rode forward as in a dream until he reached a friendly wood, where he fell rather than dismounted from his charger, and lay for a little while on the ground utterly powerless.

And the only concrete idea he possessed seemed to be fixed in his brain in letters of fire. Had not the Commander-in-Chief written:

"You must allow neither your own life, nor the lives of your companions, nor of your opponents, to stand in the way of the accomplishment of this mission."

* * * * *

"Chicken broth and warm milk are all very well, old chap, when a man is as *fin de siècle* as you were on Wednesday, but I think the time has really arrived when a peg would do you good. I have saved a whole bottle of the best for three hot weeks in expectation of your coming, and there's half-a-dozen of soda swinging in wet towels in the veranda."

It was Captain Adams, of the Royal Irish Lancers, who spoke, and he affected a merriment he was far from feeling as he gazed at Peyton, stretched listlessly on a charpoy beneath an awning rigged up in front of the principal abode in Turbat-i-Shaikh-Janni.

Not a word had Peyton spoken for thirty-six hours after he fell senseless at Adams's feet muttering before consciousness fled: "Russia—war—come from Quetta—search for de Vismes—carried away river."

By careful treatment the lancer had succeeded in saving Peyton's life, and believing that some tragedy had occurred, he sent out a large party of Persian horsemen to scour the country, but they returned to report that they had discovered nothing save the presence of some Cossacks at the mouth of the Kuhsan pass.

It was now the evening of Sunday.

Peyton was much better and able to grasp the tremendous importance of his journey when Adams had explained why he and nineteen other British officers had been living for six weeks on the Persian frontier, close to the Central Asian Railway.

"Come," said Adams, "a small dose of whisky and soda will give you an appetite. I must pack you into a *palki** to-morrow, and carry you off to Mahommadabad, which we have made our centre. There you will find six or seven other men, who have charge of sections. It is a great scheme, I can assure you."

"I will be ready," said Peyton. Then he added gravely: "Is there any news of de Vismes?"

"Not the slightest. Heaven knows where that beastly river would carry him to. It runs into nowhere."

Whereby Adams meant that the torrent was one of those numerous Central Asian streams which, rising in the hills, finally lose themselves in the midst of desert wastes of sand.

Peyton was much cast down for a while. But thorough soldier as he was, he knew that his brave comrades, Englishmen and natives, had succumbed to the lottery of war.

He declined the proffered peg, but asked for a cheroot. Adams and he were lighting their cigars when they noticed three wretched-looking men, attired in a remarkable manner, and mounted on small ponies, coming through the bazaar, attended by a furious crowd.

Peyton suddenly forgot his weakness. He leapt to his feet and yelled: "By——, its de Vismes and the two sowars!"

And it was.

De Vismes had been deposited on a sandbank, and had thence crawled, with a sprained wrist and a bruised knee, to a Persian village, where he lay quite prostrate for the best part of two days.

Here he was found by the Ris aldar and Musa Khan, who had driven back the Cossacks by first firing at them briskly in the darkness, and then causing their own two chargers, by lashing them with their sabres, to gallop madly down the narrow path and precipitate nearly a dozen of the astounded pursuers into the ravine, where they were found by the kites next day.

Some 70,000 men were placed on board transports.

The two Mohammedans crossed to the north of the stream higher up than the officers, and thus escaped the second batch of Cossacks in their turn.

And these things formed but a feeble prelude to the events that followed.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Bridge over the Oxus.

Russia is popularly supposed to be impregnable and unassailable. Vast though her bulk, she apparently offers few openings for attack. Napoleon once drove an army like a lance into her breast, but the lance was shattered by its own blow. England and France and Turkey combined, spent all their strength against a puny peninsula in the Crimea. Russia, therefore, say the people who make war in words, cannot be invaded.

In India, however, a different opinion prevails. There, in the past, it was sufficient for a place to be impregnable to render it a fitting locality for a British cantonment. Chitral was unassailable until Colonel Kelly and his sepoys dragged guns through six feet of snow and over a 12,000 feet pass in order to mount them upon the fort of that name.

England was not, as we have seen, unprepared for sudden attack by the Continental powers, and when the Government of India were apprised of the threatened danger they

* A covered litter.

Digitized by Google

at once took steps to checkmate any move on the part of the only foe they had reason to suspect.

Twenty British officers, fully conversant with the Russian and Persian languages, were dispatched early in April to Khorassan, *vid* the Persian Gulf and the Karun River. They were accompanied by a trusted representative of the Foreign Department, who used some remarkably convincing arguments with the Shah, as that excellent descendant of the Prophet thenceforth professed the utmost ignorance of any events occurring on the Meshed-Astrabad frontier.

The range of hills running from the Caspian to the north-west corner of Afghanistan is occupied by Persian and Turkoman robber tribes. These, for the most part, have been driven out of Russian territory by successive wars and the vigorous application of the knout.

They are a nomad population, all armed and mounted, and all ready to enter into any scheme wherein bakshish, pillage, and a reasonable amount of throat-cutting are judiciously blended.

For twenty Englishmen, skilled in the manners of the East, and well supplied with money, to rapidly gain considerable ascendancy over these easily-led people was a simple matter of time and careful treatment.

When Captain Peyton reached Mohammadabad, therefore, he found that he was commandant of an irregular but mobile force of some 40,000 horsemen, each batch of 2,000 being under the special care of an English officer, and the whole body filled with malicious glee at the thought of striking an effective blow at their hereditary enemy.

The force was scattered at considerable intervals along a line of country which ran parallel with and some sixty miles south of the Transcaspian Railway, and the sealed orders delivered to the commandant by Adams, instructed him to advance upon the railway, sieze simultaneously as much of its length as was possible between Dushakh and Kizil Arvat, and endeavour to hold the two latter places.

If the strength of the enemy was such as to render the concluding part of this programme impossible, he was to retire, having thoroughly destroyed the line before relinquishing it.

His attack was to be timed to fit in with the destruction of the first Russian Army Corps, the advance of which upon India he would be certain to hear of.

If able to maintain his ground, he should strengthen both ends of his extended line of operations, and remain immovable until help came from India.

The principle underlying the scheme was at once apparent to an able soldier like Peyton.

By capturing or destroying Russia's means of rapid communication with the Afghan frontier in the neighbourhood of Penjdeh, and assuming that her Asiatic provinces were practically denuded of troops to supply the first expeditionary corps for the descent upon India, her European and really reliable army in the Caucasus was placed in a far worse position for quick movement than the Anglo-Indian troops at Quetta.

In a word, the battle-ground was shifted from Herat and Kandahar to a vulnerable portion of Russian territory.

Lord Wolseley and Sir George White had other cards to play after winning the first *coup*.

The Commander-in-Chief at l o ne, as a precautionary measure, communicated with Lord Roberts as to the state of affairs in France.

That gallant officer replied that he could do without reinforcements until after the approaching battle on the outskirts of Rouen, as the supports could not possibly reach him in time to be of any use in this engagement, and if things happened to his liking he thought the French would be satisfied until he was a little nearer Paris.

Over one half of the Third French Expedition, as it was called, was converted into a 7th Army Corps for attack upon Russia. Some 70,000 m n were p aced on board transports and sailed for Gibra.tar. Of the Canadian troops 25,000 were diverted off Queenstown for the same destination, and a South African contingent of 15,000 men was also sent there by cabled instructions, which reached the commander at St. Helena.

A number of British ships left Gibraltar, and, by way of preliminary, threatened Marseilles and Toulon.

Peyton himself led the first squadron.

It was consequently believed in France that all these preparations, which, in due course, became known, foreboded a second invasion of the southern provinces, and Germany and Russia shared this view.

They were, however, all mistaken.

When the Viceroy cabled home the tidings of the battle of the Helmund, Lord Wolseley, in conjunction with the Admiralty, issued orders to the following effect:

The strong fleet at Gibraltar, now nearly doubled in numbers by reason of the captured ships of the enemy having been hastily repaired, was to advance through the Mediterranean with the transports containing 110,000 home and Colonial troops. The regiments at Malta and in Egypt were to be picked up *en route*, and the force must then pass the Dardanelles, with or without the consent of Turkey.

The Russian Black Sea fleet should be either captured or driven into Sevastopol and held there, whilst the expedition proper must proceed to and occupy Odessa, thence forcing its way along the Danube and seizing the railway to Tiraspol and Balta.

Contemporaneously with these events, a combined American and Canadian Corps would cross the Pacific and attack Vladivostock, in Eastern Siberia, and preparations would rapidly be made for a determined assault upon St. Petersburg and the Neva by an Anglo-American naval and military force.

It will be seen that the words of a sporting subaltern were fully justified when he said that we were going to "serve it up hot for Russia."

Fortunately, Commandant Peyton was not embarrassed by any knowledge of the gigantic scope of the project of which he was such an integral factor.

He set about his business promptly and effectually.

Having accurately gauged the date of the encounter between Alikhanoff's host and the British, he ordered that all arrangements should be made for a forward movement on June 11th, to culminate on June 14th.

To de Vismes he assigned the command of the right attack, that is, upon Dushakh.

Rightly judging that this would be a vulnerable point by reason of a possible Russian advance from Merv and the Oxus, he sent two divisions, those of Adams and Hutchinson, to effect the capture.

He personally decided to be carried by bearers, so that he might fully recover from his fatigue, to the extreme left, at Kulun Kalassi, where he would lead the advance on Fort Poltawskoe, and thence strive to reach Kizil Arvat.

It would be necessary to travel in a litter night and day in order to gain Kulun Kalassi in time, and he dispatched mounted messengers to warn all the officers *en route* to meet him and discuss details.

Peyton was distinctly a man of action. He conferred with each of the remaining officers whom he had not seen at Mohammadabad, gave them their instructions, and in case of success, told them to proceed to right or left, as

Digitized by Google

the case might be, along the line to strengthen the two bases.

Rolling-stock and engines were to be carefully preserved, but, above and beyond all else, at the first note of danger, after the original design had been achieved, the line must be completely destroyed.

The two Mohammedan cavalry officers accompanied Peyton, and at midday on the 11th the little party reached Kulun Kalassi, where they found Captain Applin, of the 7th Bombay Infantry, expecting them.

This was the first contingent of his strange command that Peyton had time or opportunity to inspect, and he was immediately impressed with the marvellous effect which a few weeks of skilled European training had had upon the motley crew which he anticipated meeting.

Drawn up in five regiments of four squadrons each, the Goklan Turkomans, who composed this particular detachment, constituted a really excellent body of irregular horse. They stood stolidly in their ranks as Peyton rode up and down their lines, proud of their unwonted steadiness and parade-like uniformity.

They blurted out all the information they were asked for.

"How on earth did you get those chaps to obey you?" he said to Applin.

"Well, you see, I came here six weeks ago, and at once called a meeting of the elders. I lied like a Chinaman. I said that a great Jehad was to be declared against the Russians, who, by-the-way, drove this crowd out of Geok Tepe in Skobeleff's time, and promised them plenty of bakshish and loot if they followed my advice. More than that, I gave their palms a liberal greasing at the start, and said that this was nothing to the treasure which would flow when the Queen came to see the Shah. And this is the result."

"It's all very well, Applin, for you to put it that way," said Peyton kindly; "but it is easy to see that you have almost worked miracles to lick them into such shape in so short a time. I only hope that every other man on the frontier has been as successful."

The younger officer flushed with pleasure at hearing these words from his senior.

Orders were given for an immediate start. When a moment's interval occurred for a mouthful to eat, Applin said:

"By-the-way, I've been out of the world for over two months. What's the favourite for the Derby?"

"Rothschild's horse, I believe."

"Good, I've backed him. It's time the blue jacket had a turn; and I've taken ten tickets in the Turf Club Lottery."

Applin's mind was now at ease. He had "got on" at a good price, so he devoted his energies with much cheerfulness towards assisting the downfall of Russia.

After a three days' march through the hills the force came within striking distance of Poltawskoe. The night of the 14th had been appointed as the time of the combined attack, if possible, at midnight.

Rissaldar Shah Nawaz Khan and Jemadar Musa Khan were detached at the head of a flanking party to the west, with orders to stop any train which might be proceeding towards Kizil Arvat, but not to interfere with one coming into the interior. They were also to prevent mounted messengers from reaching the next station on that side, Aschaman.

Precisely at twelve o'clock Peyton himself led the first squadron at the gallop into the station, and his first care was to unship the telegraph instrument.

At the same moment Applin dashed at the fort, where, beyond a mere scuffle, there was no fighting. The garrison, such as it was, consisting of a couple of elderly staff officers and a few Russo-Turkomans, could not have been more unprepared for attack if a meteorite had fallen on top of them.

Within five minutes Peyton and Applin were expressing their astonishment at the completeness of the surprise, and whilst they were talking the whistle of an engine sounded across the desert.

They were standing in the station, and they compelled the station master, under pain of instant death, to properly adjust the signals, whilst they disposed their men on both sides of the rails, there being no platforms, to capture the train when it drew up.

Here again the operation was simplicity itself.

The Russian engine-driver and native stoker were too astounded to do anything when Peyton jumped on to the engine. They were promptly seized and bound before they knew that an enemy was at hand.

The rest of the train contained, as it transpired, commissariat officials who had been convoying stores to Geok Tepe, Askabad and Merv.

In their amazement they blurted out all the information they were asked for. Both Peyton and Applin had difficulty in restraining the expression of their joyful surprise when they learnt that the accumulations of months of secret preparation by Russia had fallen into their possession, if the attack had been similarly successful all along the line to Dushakh.

It seemed, too, that the rolling stock blocked the way, and it was with difficulty that two trains daily now traversed the system.

The Russians detailed these highly important facts without hesitation, apparently believing that refusal to answer would mean summary execution, and, indeed, it was with some difficulty that the British officers made their fierce followers understand that they must not strangle or behead every Russian they encountered.

A wild project now entered Peyton's head, and he in vain strove to repress it.

Why, if a nominally fortified place merely requiring walking into in order to be at his mercy, should not the whole line be seized to its Caspian terminus?

At last he communicated the idea to Applin and the latter agreed that, unless unforeseen obstacles, such as the presence of a strong body of troops at Kizil Arvat or Usun-Ada, were encountered, two hundred men could do the job quite as efficiently as two thousand.

The outcome of their deliberations was that in a couple of hours' time, Applin and a selected body of his levies started in the train for the west, with the native stoker, bribed beyond his wildest dreams, acting as driver.

Not until thirty hours later did the train return, bearing the following note from Applin:

"After being nearly annihilated by those two Mohammedan ruffians you brought with you, I at last was able to make them understand that we, and not the Russians, were in possession of the train. They are useful fellows, so I took the liberty of bringing them along with me. I have captured no end of places whose names I can't remember. Kizil Arvat is one of them. My principal occupation was in kicking station-masters to make them comprehend the situation, and in unfixing telegraph instruments. I am now in Usun-Ada where I have seized fourteen fairly-sized steamers. It appears that every available man has gone with Alikhanoff, and the line has been given up entirely to transporting stores and ammunition prior to the arrival of the Grand Duke's army. If he puts in an appearance I am afraid that my 250 vagabonds won't last long. I would, therefore, suggest immediate reinforcements. Fortunately I got to the submarine cable office before any news was sent to Baku. I have found a native here who swears he will wire anything I tell him, and translate all messages received. I

Digitized by Google

must trust him, because no news at the other end would be almost as bad as the actual facts. So I propose to amuse the Grand Duke a bit before the thing leaks out from the Bokharan side. By-the-way, I do believe they have no telegraph line northwards from the frontier except that which passes through here. If so, we are in luck. There are some Frenchmen in the employ of the Caspian Maritime Company, whose steamers I have seized, and they have given me no end of trouble. My cable expert says he can get some men to repair the telegraph line, and work the instruments. I am sending them back on a smaller train; they will put things straight as they go, and you may expect them some hours after you receive this."

Within three days Peyton, with 10,000 of his strange auxiliaries, was in Usun-Ada, and started constructing earthworks to defend the harbour, whilst Applin sent long messages to the Grand Duke Paul, detailing the magnificent progress made in the forwarding of stores, and imploring him to expedite the departure of everything but men, as the line was not ready for the passage of troops yet. Besides, there was no news from Alikhanoff.

* * * * *

(To be continued.)

FIFTY GOLDEN SOVEREIGNS

GIVEN AWAY EVERY WEEK.

Every week the Editor of SHORT STORIES addresses fifty envelopes to fifty people in various parts of the country. Inside each envelope he places a sovereign, and locks them away in his private safe.

SIMPLY TAKE A POST-CARD and address it to the Editor under the following conditions:

☞ Ask if a sovereign has been addressed to you, giving your full name and address clearly written in ink.

Fifty names and addresses have been picked out at random from directories, etc., etc.

No sovereign, however, will be awarded unless it is applied for, so it would be advisable for you to tell your friends to drop us a post-card, whether they are readers or not.

All applications for No. 6 distribution must reach us by November 14th addressed to The 6th Sovereign Editor, "Short Stories" Office, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Each application must be made separately.

Result of the Third Distribution appears on the next column.

RESULT OF No. 3 DISTRIBUTION.

FIVE persons have this week successfully applied for a sovereign each. Their names and addresses are as follows:

W. WILLIAMS, 459 High Road, Tottenham, N.

G. JONES, 26 Yorkington Street, Edgeley, Stockport.

TAYLER WILCOCK, Danes Avenue, Roundhay, Leeds.

H. WOODYARD, 53 Longfellow Road, Walthamstow.

W. WEDGBURY, Church Cottages, Chelmarsh, near Bridgnorth.

Below you will find the names and addresses of those who would have had a £1 each if they had applied:

J. A. Robinson, The Glen, Torquay Road, Newton Abbot; W. Winter, 24 Rhondda Street, Swansea; C. B. Stokes, Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern Link; J. Allan, 12 Sydney Street, Glasgow; J. B. Corner, 8 Mathieson Road, Glasgow; Miss Freeman, 5 Beauchamp Avenue, Leamington; E. E. Garman, 5 Surrey Grove, Norwich; A. Rooke, 13 Egerton Road, Plymouth; Tho Wilson, 39 Plymouth Road, Penarth; Mrs. Spicer, 19 Richmond Road, Worcester; W. Hall, 43 Burnaby Street, Splotts, Cardiff; R. Loan, 3 Farley Terrace, Truro; S. Houlson, Alverton Street, Penzance; John Marshall, 167 Bank Street, Coatbridge; J. E. Keates, 5 Holmer Street, Hereford; W. Page, 44 Warwick Street, Wolverhampton; A. R. Ward, 13 Maria Street, Neath; W. Mair, Albany Place, St. Andrews; Chas. Lloyd, 37 St. Mary's Street, Bridgnorth; Miss M. E. Wycherley, 10 St. Julian's Friars, Shrewsbury; W. Thomas, 8 Richmond Terrace, Aberavon; W. Scott, 9 Shrubbery Street, Kidderminster; W. H. Adams, 37 Randall Street, Sheffield; C. Const, 101 Victoria Buildings, Clerkenwell Road, E.C.; W. Gibbons, 7 Church Grove, St. Andrew's Road, Small Heath, Birmingham; J. P. Endered, Evesham Road, Headless Cross, Redditch; Thos. Boddy, Heighington R.S.O., County Durham; W. J. Lavers, Fortescue Hotel, Plymouth; Geo. Philip, 3 Sandquay Terrace, Dartmouth; R. Davis, 15 Smith Street, Hanley, Staffs.; G. V. Wood, 2 Woodside Terrace, Onchan, Isle of Wight; H. Boston, 407 Old Chester Road, Rock Ferry; W. M. Garner, 5 Gladstone Terrace, Brighton; W. Eaton, Holm Villa, Cathcart, Glasgow; Mrs. Williams, 2 Picton Place, Haverfordwest; J. Matthews, 2 Elmfield Villas, St. Mary Church; J. Hazeldene, Middle Class Schools, Sheffield; Robert Leslie, 6 Albert Street, Shrewsbury; E. F. McCalmont, 115 Sugarfield Street, Belfast; Rev. Alex. Brown, 94 Hamilton Place, Aberdeen; W. Collins, 24 Oglander Road, Maxted Road, E. Dulwich; Chas. Hayes, Laurel Cottage, Norwich Road, Bournemouth; J. Mitchell, Lerryn, Lostwithiel; W. F. Campton, 49, Upper Townsend Street, Belfast; G. Gordon, 18 Hartland Road, Kilburn, N.W.

TO EVERYBODY NAMED JONES!

I shall have something of importance to say to you next week.

To Everybody who is not Named Jones.

Take this copy of SHORT STORIES and show the above paragraph to all your friends named Jones.

Digitized by Google

The Blood Mirror

"WHAT in the name of goodness is this thing, Grant?" asked Alden, holding up an oddly-shaped thick vial, stained on one side with some dull red colour, and covered with the accumulated dust of years. The elder man lowered his newspaper and directed his quiet gaze at the article which had excited his friend's curiosity, and which he had come upon while rummaging in Grant's cabinet of odds and ends.

"There; hold it a little more in the light, old man," said the latter, and then, as his guest did so, a quick frown passed over his pleasant face, and he added: "I thought that infernal thing was destroyed long ago. It is all that is left of my blood mirror."

"Your what?" asked Alden, in mild astonishment, turning from the vial to the man.

"My blood mirror—the one Venzeni once had. Did you never see it before?"

"Never," replied Alden decidedly, replacing the vial carefully, and observing it from a respectful distance. "What is a blood mirror, if I may ask?"

"A blood mirror," returned Grant shortly, "is an abominably artistic invention of a most savage set of men—the Maoris of New Zealand."

"Come," said Alden, drawing up a chair to the table and preparing to listen, "this sounds interesting! What is the story? I can see one in your eyes, and the title is certainly gruesome enough."

"Perhaps so; but not half so gruesome as the last experience I had with the mirror," returned Grant grimly. "Do you care to hear about it?"

"Oh, no," replied Alden, with mild, friendly sarcasm; "I never care to hear your stories; you ought to know it by this time! I only let you tell them so you'll be amused and not break the furniture, or mark on the walls, or pull the cat's tail. If you think I——"

"Very well," said Grant, interrupting and smiling good-naturedly at the younger man, "you shall have it then. You remember, perhaps, poor Venzeni's body-servant—that howling dervish, half Maori, half Zulu (though how he became so I never knew), and wholly a crude magician of no mean order. He died the same night that Moore murdered Venzeni, and, among the other strange contrivances of his art, he left this mirror. And as Venzeni had willed me all his things, or nearly so, and because no one else wanted the savage's dried skins and bones and other disagreeable things, I took them, the mirror along with the rest. And having heard of the marvellous power attributed to the uncanny thing, I determined to try it some night.

"The power which this mirror possessed, according to what Venzeni had told me, was that of reflecting events as they happened, anywhere in the world, for the person who looked into it, and who willed it. The absurdity of this was so evident that I only laughed when he mentioned it. But Venzeni was always a hot-tempered chap, you know, and this made him flash up like powder in the pan. 'If you will come here to-morrow night,' said he, 'I will have him prove what I say, for your amusement.' But though I promised to do so, to smooth his ruffled feelings down, he was called away that afternoon, and, by the time he returned home, we had both forgotten the incident.

"One day, while reading, I came across a little article on this very subject, written by as firm a believer in the occult as ever Venzeni had been, however, and there I learnt the unnatural heathenish manner in which these mirrors are manufactured. It seems that the blood used is that of an enemy killed in a hand-to-hand conflict, and after a lot of disgusting conjuring, it becomes endowed with its wonderful power. Some other liquid is also put with it to prevent its evaporation, and it is tightly corked, and there you are. Of course, horrible as the whole thing was to contemplate, this interested me, and, thereupon, I got out my specimen of a savage magic, and pouring it carefully into a saucer, I passed my hands over it, once or twice, thought earnestly of a certain street-crossing, and looked into the mirror.

"The result, I acknowledge, startled me, for there, before me plainly as if I were looking at the scene itself through the wrong end of an opera-glass, say, was the street I had thought of, with cabs and drays passing up and down, and pavements lined with people, and everything just as I knew it would be at that time of night. Suddenly, however, as I stared down, fascinated by this new, if uncanny, toy, I observed a strangely familiar figure turn the corner, and, looking steadily at him, I recognised—myself.

"Before I could begin to puzzle my own mind as to the meaning of this, however, two maddened horses attached to a carriage seemed to dash wildly down the street, and, in endeavouring to save a child I saw crossing

Digitized by Google

it from being run over, the miniature figure of myself sprang in front of the excited animals, and the next moment I was being trampled beneath their feet.

"Then the mirror cleared, and I saw nothing but the dark, dully-shining blood before me.

"To say that I was satisfied with my experiment would hardly be truthful, for I was not. the thing worried me, and when, two weeks later, this very scene that I had looked upon really happened, as I was being carried bruised and pretty well done up, to my rooms, I remembered with very little satisfaction that Venzeni had had once said this particular mirror was different from the usual sort.

"Evidently it was, for not only did this little pool of blood shadow what had happened, but, in my case at least it had foretold the future, and had I been smart enough at the time and given to taking hints, I would probably have been more careful. Thinking thus, I mentally resolved to let the uncanny affair severely alone, and then fell to patching myself up as best I could. In a few days I was fully recovered, and, having dropped the accident from my mind, I soon forgot both it and the mirror. A month passed and another, and then one night that weird possession of mine fairly thrust itself upon me, and in an unlucky hour I took it out again. Would now that my hand had withered as I touched it, for it cost me the best friend of my life!

"You will remember Kenneth Hardesty, I know; kind-hearted, good-natured, noble old Kenneth, with a soul as big as his athletic body, and friends by the score. But none of these loved him as I did, and for years we had been inseparable. We were hard working young fellows then, and life was not a bed of roses to either of us, especially him, for not only was his salary small and the work hard, but the poor chap was desperately in love with a girl who couldn't have appreciated him had she lived twice as long as she did.

"One night he came to my room with a more than usually tired look upon his handsome face, and, dropping into the chair, he said:

"'Grant, I'm about done for. This strain is killing me, and I can't see the end anywhere. The work grows harder and harder, and though, Heaven knows, I try my best, I don't get on—I don't get on! For one look into the future I'd sell my very soul, I believe.' As he spoke some miserable thought suggested that mirror of mine, and without answering him I took it out, poured the liquid into the saucer, and set it before him.

"'Look into it then!' I exclaimed.

"'What is that stuff?' he asked, drawing back instinctively. Then I told him about it as briefly as possible, and showed him how to manipulate the things; and, though he laughed at what he chose to call my imagination, he passed his hands over it and looked down. And a moment later Kenneth Hardesty was realising his idle wish.

"I watched him curiously as scene after scene shifted in rapid succession before his eyes; and from the deep breathing and the intense expression on his face, I knew that he had overcome his momentary repugnance of the mirror, and was reading with spell-bound fascination the story the dull liquid before him related. Presently he looked up, with a great sigh, however, and passed his hand over his face in a dazed way. 'It is wonderful! wonderful!' he cried, springing to his feet. Then, with a quick wring of my hand, and murmuring something about being everlastingly indebted to me, he rushed out of the room and up the stairs, where I heard him whistling and singing softly for hours after he ought to have been in bed.

"From that hour Kenneth was a changed man. Where he had been moody and dreaming of late, he was now alert and quick, cheerful, hopeful, making more friends than ever, and creeping steadily up in his business. Once or twice I wondered if, after all, that strange little vial contained the elements of happiness for some mortal; but I did not ask Kenneth's opinion on the subject.

"The fact was, his actions began to trouble me now. Every evening, as regularly as the clock struck ten (as he had done ever since the first night I put the thing before him), he walked into my rooms, and, with a hazy greeting for me, walked straight to where the vial stood, and, pouring its contents out into the saucer, fell to studying it as if his very life depended on it. Once or twice I tried to draw him away from it, but he always shook me off impatiently. Plainly enough my poor friend was bewitched by the mirror. And then one night, a month after he had first looked upon it, there came a change.

"He had been bending over the little pool of blood not more than half-an hour, when I saw him turn white suddenly, and, rising quickly, he muttered something about a lie, and passed hastily out of the room without his customary good-night. I followed him to the door, but he did not hear my question as to what was troubling him, and went upstairs to his own room, where I heard him pacing restlessly up and down for the greater part of the night. There was evidently something radically wrong with him, and I worried long and uselessly that evening over his strange conduct for the last month. The following night I learnt the cause of it.

"Ten o'clock came and Kenneth did not put in an appearance.

"Eleven, and half-past that hour, crept by and still he did not turn up. This was unusual, and from the odd manner in which he had been acting, I feared something serious might have happened to him; so, taking up my coat and hat, I was just starting out in search of him, when the door was suddenly thrown open with a violent motion, and a man strode into the room. It was Kenneth; but what a terrible human being he was now!

"His clothes were torn and disarranged, as if he had just left off struggling for dear life with an enemy, and his usually immaculate shirt front—he was in evening dress—was covered with drops and splashes of blood, while his rumpled hair and pale face were flecked with the same red stains. One look into his deep-sunken, blood-shot eyes, told more than all the rest, and my heart sank within my breast. Poor boy, he was mad! And the first words he spoke confirmed the insane look in his eyes.

"'Where is it?' he asked hoarsely, shutting the door with a quick motion, and striding across the room to

Digitized by Google

where I stood. 'Where is this mirror of yours? Where is it, I say?'

"His voice fairly rose to a shriek as he spoke, and my blood ran cold. But I knew that in calmness lay my only hope, and pointing to the mirror which rested on the top of the cabinet, I said:

"'It is there, Kenneth. But what do you want with it, and what does this—and this—and this mean?' I asked, touching his blood-stained shirt and coat and face.

"'It means that I have killed him—I have killed the wretch, the scoundrel—do you understand?'

"I confess I did not; but it was no time to argue the point with a madman, so, stepping back a few paces, to where I might reach the poker when the attack I felt sure was coming should be made, I waited for him to go on.

"'Where? Where?' he asked more quietly, passing his hand over his face again as if to tear an invisible veil away from his eyes. 'Where did you say it was? Let me have it, Grant, let me! It has never lied to me; it was a good friend, a good kind little friend, and—and—what am I saying? It told me of the work I would do, and I did it. It told me I would succeed, and I have. It told me everything I asked it, and you—where were you, Grant? I haven't seen you for ten centuries and fifty days! But, no matter, the mirror was here, the kind little mirror, and then it told me—ah, what then——,' and his head dropped suddenly upon his blood-spattered breast for a moment in silence. When he raised it again he was calmer, and for a fleeting minute I think he spoke rationally.

"'Grant,' said he, in a changed, dull voice, 'I am mad, I think. I have been so for how long you only know—I do not; but to-night I have done murder—foul, foul murder. Yet it was not I—it was the mirror. It told me that she would be false to me, and I swore it lied! but it did not, Grant, it did not. To-night I found them together, she in his arms, and I stabbed them both there—to the heart—with this!'

"As he spoke he drew from his inner breast pocket a small stiletto, and, as it flashed in the lamp-light, I saw its blade was covered with streaks of half-dried blood. For awhile the room seemed to reel about me as I realised the awful crime my friend had just confessed; but I was brought to my senses by his moving to the cabinet again.

"Looking up, I saw he held the little mirror for a moment in his trembling fingers, and a few drops from it were creeping slowly down the saucer and running over his fingers.

"'Yes,' he said, 'you showed me; you told me it would be so, and that I should kill them both together, and though I said you lied and swore I would not doubt her, you did not lie. I have killed her—him and her—him and her'—he paused for a second as if his mind were clouding again, and when he went on, I somehow felt the end was near, 'and I buried them side by side,' he said, 'where no one will ever find them, until their bones poke up through the dirt and shine in the sun. One good stroke, and another, and there they lay, writhing in each other's arms and trying to speak, while I and Death stood and watched them and laughed and laughed. And are you satisfied? Is this enough, or shall I look again and see myself going out into the unknown to meet them? Shall I?' No. I have seen enough, and you—you shall never spoil another life as you have spoilt mine!'

"As he spoke he raised the saucer and hurled it straight at the window. I turned to see it go, and in the crash of broken glass as the hard porcelain was dashed through the pane, leaving the red liquid dripping down the glass in great heavy drops, I did not hear the fall of the heavier body behind me. But as I turned to look at Kenneth again, I found him stretched out on the rug before the fire, the dagger buried in his heart.

"'And that is why,' concluded Alden's host abruptly, 'I dislike the sight of that vial you have just brought to light. Please drop it into the hottest part of the fire, and let us get on to more cheerful subjects. Blood mirrors may do in New Zealand, but I don't want any more about my house.'

"'I don't blame you,' said Alden thoughtfully, as the vial began to melt and run slowly down between the glowing coals. 'It would be strange if you did!'

E. G. H.

RESULT OF "FOOTBALL PLAYERS'" COMPETITION!

No one succeeded in sending in a correct result in above competition, the nearest being three sets with six mistakes. We are therefore jumping the first three prizes together, and forwarding £3 to each of the following:

CHARLES V. WALKER, 46 Chester Street, Oxford.

MRS. RYAN, Manfield, Darlington.

E. COOMBS, 18 Kingscote Road, Birmingham.

A prize of £1 has been sent to

A. HUTTON, 3 Lapage Street, Bradford, Yorks.,

whose attempt was the neatest of those containing seven mistakes.

To the following, twenty-three books have been forwarded:

Emily Counter, 19 Northcote Road, Bournemouth; Mrs. Carpenter, 17 Bridge Avenue, Hammersmith; J. Edwards, 101 Victoria Buildings, Clerkenwell Road, E.C.; A. Wright, c/o E. Bishop, 2 St. Andrew's Hill, City; A. Clarke, c/o E. Bishop, 2 St. Andrew's Hill, City; E. Coombs, 18 Kingscote Road, Birmingham; G. Beever, 83 Drakefield Road, Nunhead, S.E.; A. Goodwin, 2 St. Andrew's Hill, City, E.C.; J. A. Floyd, 47 Trinity Road, Southwark, S.E.; T. West, 46 Boston Rd, Boundary Road, Walthamstow; A. Winner, 2 St. Andrew's Hill, City, E.C.; A. Wentworth, 10 Cardwell Street, Liverpool; H. Buxton, 63 Leicester Street, Norwich; R. Webster, 19 Hatton Hall, Hatton Garden; Miss E. Cramphorn, 28 Woodlands Road, Leytonstone; Miss E. Parish, 28 Woodlands Road, Leytonstone; C. Cramphorn, 56 Granleigh Road, Leytonstone; A. Cramphorn, 28 Woodlands Road, Leytonstone; T. M. Child, 55 Rhondda Street, Swansea; Mrs. E. Const, 101 Victoria Buildings, Clerkenwell Road, E.C.; C. Const, 101 Victoria Buildings, Clerkenwell Road, E.C.; Miss R. Const, 101 Victoria Buildings, Clerkenwell Road, E.C.; A. Luck, c/o Purvis, 495 High Road, Leytonstone.

Digitized by Google

"DELIGHTFUL" TREATMENT FOR CURING CORPULENCY.

TWO POUNDS OF FAT REMOVED IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

Extreme Obesity becoming a Thing of the Past.

CORPULENCE—INCREASING POPULARITY OF AN EFFECTUAL CURE.

A MR. RUSSELL, author and specialist in obesity, has experimentally tried the effect of administering large doses to moderately lean persons of his well-known herbal discovery which is so marvellously effectual in reducing superfluous fat, with the result that there is not the slightest alteration or diminution of weight recorded, thereby proving conclusively to our minds that it is only the unhealthy adipose waste tissue which is destroyed, for after dispensing a few fluid ounces of his remarkable vegetable compounds he succeeds in destroying the diseased fatty mass at the rate of from 2lb. to even 12lb. in seven days. There can be no ambiguity about it, for any persons can test this for themselves by standing on a weighing machine. He explains that all lean persons carry a certain amount of fat necessary for the natural production of heat in the body, but Nature has only stored up her requisite stock in the healthy system which she most jealously guards, and thus declines to part with an ounce to the persuasions of Mr. Russell's vegetable tonic, however immoderate the dose may be, which testifies abundantly to the effect that it is only a chemical solvent of insalubrious adipose tissue. There is no doubt that the inventor of the composition must have possessed a profound vegetable knowledge in selecting this simple but peculiar combination. Those who resort to the pernicious products of the mineral kingdom, or even the deleterious sections of the vegetable world, doubtless can decoct something powerful but injurious in its action; such, however, require no laudatory commendation; but Mr. Russell (we herewith append his address: Woburn House, 27, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., the author of "Corpulency, and the Cure," 256 pages, price 3d., stamps, post free) makes no secret of the simplicity of his treatment, and avers that the decoction can be drunk as a refreshing summer drink, pleasant to the palate, yet having sufficient effect, although perfectly harmless, to remove generally 2lb. or more in twenty-four hours. We think stout persons would do well to send for this book, which can be obtained at the address given above.

The following are extracts from other Journals:

A SPANISH COUNT REDUCES HIS WEIGHT 34lb. IN 22 DAYS.

Any remedy that can be suggested as a cure or alleviation for stoutness will be heartily welcomed. There has recently been issued a well-written book, the author of which seems to know what he is talking about. It is entitled, "Corpulency, and the Cure" (256 pages), and is a cheap issue (only threepence), published by Mr. F. C. Russell of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. It appears that Mr. Russell has submitted all kinds of proofs to the English Press. The editor of the *Tablet*, the Catholic organ, writes: "Mr. Russell does not give us the slightest loophole for a doubt as to the value of his cure, for in the most straightforward and matter-of-fact manner he submitted some hundreds of original and unsolicited testimonial letters for our perusal, and offered us plenty more if required. To assist him to make this remedy known, we think we cannot do better than publish quotations from some of the letters submitted. The first one, a marchioness, writes from Madrid—'My son, Count——, has reduced his weight in twenty-two days 16 kilos = *i.e.*, 34lb.' Another writes—'So far (six weeks from the commencement of following your system) I have lost fully two stone in weight.' The next (a lady) writes—'I am just half the size' A fourth—'I find it is successful in my case. I have lost 8lb. in weight since I commenced (two weeks).' Another writes—'A reduction of 18lb. in a month is a great success.' A lady from Bournemouth writes—'I feel much better, have less difficulty in breathing, and can walk about.' Again, a lady says—'It reduced me considerably, not only in body, but all over.'" The author is very positive. He says—"Step on a weighing machine on Monday morning and again on Tuesday, and I guarantee that you have lost 2lb. in weight without the slightest harm, and vast improvement in health through ridding the system of unhealthy accumulations."—*Cork Herald.*

CONSTITUTIONAL STOUTNESS AN ERROR.

It is a matter for congratulation that obesity is taking its proper place as a disease, and is receiving that scientific attention which it has long lacked. It does not follow that a person need to be the size of Sir John Falstaff to show that he is unhealthily fat. According to a person's height so should his weight correspond, and this standard has been prepared by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Bedford Square, London, W.C., so that any one can see at a glance whether or no he is too stout. People in the past have been wont to regard fatness as constitutional, and something to be laughed at rather than to be prescribed for seriously; but it is evidently an error, as persons whose mode of life has caused a certain excess of flesh require treating for the cause of that excess, not by merely stopping further increase, but by removing the cause itself. It is astonishing how long we go on perpetuating error, and how difficult it is to make people disbelieve anything, no matter how palpably false the principle, if it has become at all fixed in the public mind. These facts with regard to obesity, however, are so obvious that there ought to be no difficulty about their acceptance when once they become known; and, as a matter of fact, the immense number of persons who have already acknowledged their truth by recording the benefits received from Mr. Russell's treatment is simply wonderful. It is marvellous how this "Pasteur" and "Koch" of English discoverers can actually reduce as much as 14lb. in seven days with a simple herbal remedy. His book (256 pages) only cost threepence, post free, and he is quite willing to afford all information to those sending as above. It is really worth reading.—*Southport Visitor.*

Digitized by Google

IN FRIENDLY CONVERSE.

T. P. H. asks: "Why does a wetting with sea-water so seldom result in a cold?" ——— Because salt water does not evaporate so quickly as fresh, the loss of heat is therefore slower and the body has time to recuperate before any evil effects are felt. The presence of the salt acts as a counter irritant or stimulant, preventing the pores from modifying to any injurious extent their wholesome action on the animal economy.

H. T.—The German Emperor seems to be anxious to imitate the great Frederick William of Prussia by enlisting big soldiers. One such soldier goes with him on his Eastern tour; the man is 6ft 10in. in his stockings. About ten years ago, he had a lieutenant who measured just 7ft. This officer looked over a garden-wall more than 6ft. high, and asked a girl to tell him the way to a certain place. She told him to "ride" to the right, etc., fully believing that he was on horseback.

X.—It was in 1605 that Dowe left a sum to pay for the tolling of the bell as a condemned criminal left his cell in Newgate on his way to execution. A handbell was also to be rung as he passed the church—criminals were not executed at the prison then. The handbell was discovered some years ago in a chest in the vestry, and hangs in the church. The charity is now diverted from its original purpose, and is used for the relief of the poor.

H D.—The most common name for a place in England is Newton; there being no fewer than seventy-two towns or villages of that name.

WEARY WILLY was much struck when travelling by rail through a certain part of India by the fact that for miles, while running through myriads of gorgeous tropical flowers, the railway embankments were covered with clover, buttercups, and daisies, similar to those that may be seen in England in the springtime. ——The presence of these simple little flowers in such a country would naturally surprise anyone who was unaware of the fact that English grass seed is sown on railway embankments the whole world over for the purposes of keeping the embankments firm. It is so tough and lasting, and strikes root so easily, that the most flimsy earthwork becomes, as it were, cemented together by it.

J. T.—The Canadian government issued stamps with the Queen's head in a widow's cap. They are not worth much; some will fetch 1s. 6d.

J. H.—Church bells are tuned by chipping the edge till the proper note is obtained.

C. N.—The Mop Fair is a Statute Fair instituted for the hiring of servants, chiefly. The Stratford-on-Avon fair is the best instance; it has been in existence for several centuries. The old character of the fair is, however, almost obsolete, although the hiring of servants is still carried on. Contracts made at the fair are legally binding for twelve months.

CAT-LOVER.—It is estimated that there are seven million cats in England, and sixty-nine varieties. Their value is much enhanced if they possess the black markings on the chest, known as "The Lord Mayor's chain." The owner of a cat of this sort has been known to refuse an offer of £500 for it.

AMBIDEXTROUS sends us a post-card to inquire why the majority of people are right-handed.———A certain professor, who has made the question a subject of study, says that infants use both hands alike until they begin to speak. The motor speech function controls the right side of the body, and the first right-handed motions are expressive motions, tending to help out speech. As speech grows, so does right-handedness.

M. S.—To clean your pipe take a shallow cork—or, still better, a rubber stopper—through which a hole is bored large enough to enable it to fit tightly on to the nozzle of a soda water siphon, and fit it into the bowl of the pipe. Insert the nozzle, the mouthpiece being directed into the vessel, force about a wineglassful of soda water through, and the pipe will be clean.

M.B.—It is a fact that several of the best known musicians and singers have taken to the rearing of live stock as a hobby or employment for their leisure. Two instances are furnished by Jean de Reszke and Paderewski. The former breeds horses, while the latter turns his attention to Scotch cattle.

RETINA.—The theory that the retina of the eye of a dead person retains a picture of the object last seen, and that this could be utilised in the detection of murderers, is very old, and has been the subject of much discussion. Investigations and experiments recently carried out tend to prove that it could be done only in exceptional circumstance and by means of an elaborate process.

PAUL thinks that a certain friend of his was "getting at him," to use his own expression, when he informed him that he once knew a chemist who converted an old linen shirt into sugar and alcohol. "Surely," he writes, "such a thing is impossible!"——— Not at all, Paul. It is quite within the bounds of possibility to convert, by means of a series of chemical operations, linen into sugar and alcohol. By merely immersing the fabric in cold, strong sulphuric acid, the cellular tissue of which it is mainly composed gradually dissolves itself into glucose. The glucose so formed may be recovered by neutralising the excess of acid with chalk, and from the ordinary product so obtained alcohol may be prepared by the ordinary process of fermentation.

G. F.—The only instance of a Speaker of the House of Commons being found unworthy of the office is that of Sir John Trevor, who was elected in 1685. After a time it became notorious that he "had his price," and ten years later, a committee reported on his conduct. He had, among other things, been guilty of taking a bribe of 1,000 guineas to hasten the passing of a local Bill. By an irony of fate, he himself had to put up the motion declaring that he was unworthy the office. He pretended to be ill after that, but it did not save him from expulsion.

BELLE.—The method adopted by one lady, well known in Society, for preserving freshness and buoyancy in age, is to lie in bed for one day and two nights right off, once each month. During that time she does not speak. She also refuses at all time to read letters, and she peruses only light and elevating literature. Whether such a course would suit you, is for you to decide.

D. K.—When a tree is struck by lightning, it is not the electricity which tears it, but the explosion of water suddenly converted into steam by the heat of the electric fluid.

SHORT STORIES' ADVERTISEMENT RATES.

Single column, per inch, per insertion	£0	10	0
Double ,, ,, ,,	1	0	0
Full page inside, facing page of matter, either white paper or 2nd or 3rd page of cover, or back page, per insertion	10	0	0
Half-page ,, ,, ,, ...	5	0	0
Quarter-page ,, ,, ...	2	10	0
Eighth-page ,, ,, ...	1	5	0
Front page, whole ,, ,, ...	12	10	0
,, half	6	5	0

All spaces above one-eighth of a page are charged at per page rate.

Series discount: 5 per cent. for 13, 10 per cent. for 26, 15 per cent. for 52 insertions.

Back blocks are charged 25 per cent. extra. All advertisements are subject to approval. All copy must be sent in by Noon on Tuesday, Nov. 15th, if intended for the Issue on sale Nov. 29th, and dated Dec. 3rd. The Proprietors reserve the right to hold over or suspend the insertion of any advertisement without prejudice to other insertions on order. All communications should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "Pearson's Weekly" Offices, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Printed and Published by C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., at Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

THE 'ENGLISH' ORGANETTE.

WITH EXPRESSION STOP EASY PAYMENTS. 4s. MONTHLY

Plays Hymns, Popular Airs, Quadrilles, Waltzes, Polkas, Reels, Hornpipes. Any tune can be played with artistic effect by anyone. No musical knowledge required. **A mere child can play it. Most marvellous Musical Instrument in the World.**

4/- MONTHLY

Price 30 - Terms: 4/- deposit and 4 - monthly. Organette delivered when first 4 - is paid. Write for list of music and full particulars. Mention this paper. J. M. DRAPER, Organette Works, BLACKBURN

NOSE

MACHINES as worn by Royalty. Shape altered permanently by few weeks' wear, 9 9 each. Red Nose cure, medically approved, 3 9. Pamphlet, "Cause and Prevention," 1 -; particulars for stamp. Mention Paper. LEES RAY, Specialist, South Castle St., Liverpool.

PALATABLE SUBSTITUTE FOR COD LIVER OIL.

DEVONSHIRE CREAM.—Really Genuine, in patent air-tight tins. ½lb., 10d.; 1lb., 1 4, 1½lb., 2/4; including tin and postage. Mrs. CONYERS, Morchard Bishop, Devon.

£100 in Prizes

1st Prize, £25; 2nd, £20; 3rd, £15; 4th, £10; 5th, £5; and 25 Prizes of £1 each.

CASH PRIZES, as above, will be given away as an advertisement for **PRAIRIE POWDERS**, the unequalled pleasant and harmless remedy for Headache, Neuralgia, Nervousness, Rheumatism, and Tic, among competitors who succeed in turning into the names of five common ailments the following letters:

ACHEHEDA, GANRLEUAI, ESNUOVSRENS, HEMSATIMUR, ITC.

Post your solution, together with a Stamped Addressed Envelope, for result, to

THE PRAIRIE POWDER CO.,
Dept. 40, 19 Borough, London, S.E.

£20

Hairdressers fitted up Estimates Free.

Tobacconists Commencing. See Illustrated Guide (259 pages), 3d. How to open a cigar store, £20 to £2,000. Tobacconists Outfitting Company, 186 Euston Road, London.

The largest and original house (50 years' reputation). MGR., H. Myers.

THE BEST HAIR DYE

in the World for Lashes, Eyebrows, and Hair on the Head, with Moustache and Beard. For Ladies' Hair and for all Colours. Had at 3s. 6d., post 3s. 9d., of ALEX. ROSS, 62 Theobald's Road, High Holborn, London, W.C. Spanish Cantharides for fallen hair, 3s. 6d., 5s. 6d., and 10s. 6d.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,

SUCH AS

Sick Headache, Constipation, Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion, Disordered Liver & Female Ailments.

SALE NOW OVER SIX MILLIONS YEARLY.

In Boxes, 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

Prepared only by the Proprietor,

THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

WHY INDUCE HEART DISEASE TO CURE YOUR HEAD

When you can get a real safe remedy like KAPUTINE?

Dr. Thurston, Licentiate, of the Royal College of Physicians, writes November 16th: "Knowing the formulæ from which **KAPUTINE** is compounded, I unhesitatingly recommend its use in preference to crude Antifibrin and other synthetic drugs which, unfortunately for sufferers, are so commonly used for Headache, and which have undoubtedly injurious effects on the Heart, Brain, and Vescicle tissues generally."

NOTHING LIKE KAPUTINE. NOTHING SIMILAR. NOTHING AS GOOD.

All leading Chemists sell it. Packets of 18 doses 1s. Sample 1d.

After 13 Years' Suffering, Cured for 1s.

The Rev. T. TAYLOR, Vicar of St. Bredward, Cornwall, writes: "Owing to a severe accident while riding, my wife has for the past thirteen years been subject to violent attacks of neuralgia. The relief she has experienced from KAPUTINE has been speedy and effectual. KAPUTINE, while it is efficacious in its use, is attended with none of the disagreeable after effects which she has experienced in the case of other drugs."

After 10 Weeks' Suffering, Cured for 1d.

From Rev. J. H. BURN.

DEER RECTORY, MINTLAW, ABERDEEN, NOVEMBER 8TH, 1897.

"My own cure with one dose of KAPUTINE was marvellous after ten weeks incessant neuralgia.

Used also by Her Grace the Countess of Cavan, Lady Dashwood, The Countess of Munster, Surgeon Lieut.-Col. Baker, etc., etc.

Nothing Similar. Nothing as Good. **KAPUTINE CURES HEADACHE IN 10 MINUTES.**

If you enclose stamped envelope to A. M. Kaputine Ltd., Huddersfield, you will get free samples by return.

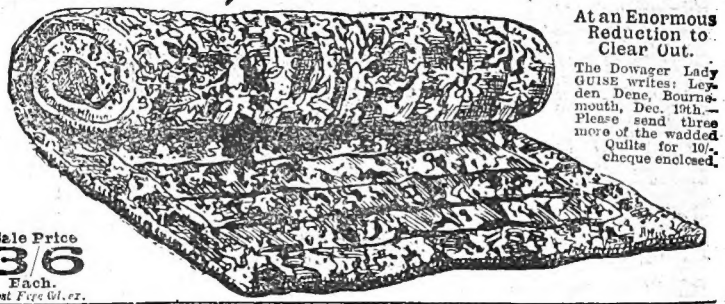
KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

GIGANTIC AUTUMN SALE, 1898.

ILLUSTRATED BARGAIN CATALOGUES OF CARPETS, HEARTHRUGS; TABLE LINEN, CURTAINS, etc., POST FREE, if mentioning *Short Stories* 12/11/98 when writing.

A Stock of 10,000 PATENT WADDED QUILTS, TORALIUMS, OR BED COVERS
(as Illustration).

Covered with Oriental Reversible Soft Sateen with double border. Size 54in. by 80in. These Quilts are offered below anything in the Wholesale Trade, and cause the greatest consternation to the buyer, wondering how they can be produced for the money.
SPECIAL OFFER.
Three Quilts for 10/-, or Six for 19/6, or Twelve for 38/-



Sale Price **3/6** Each.
Post Free Orders.

At an Enormous Reduction to Clear Out.

The Dowager Lady GUISE writes: Leyden Dene, Bournemouth, Dec. 19th.—Please send three more of the wadded Quilts for 10/-, cheque enclosed.

The "Queen's Royal" Household Carpets and Hearthrugs are extolled by all the Nations of the Earth.
Gigantic Sale of the "QUEEN'S ROYAL" Household

Sale Price. **2/- HEARTHRUGS** Reg.

In REVERSIBLE RICH TURKEY PATTERNS, measuring 6ft. long, and 3ft. wide. These HEARTHRUGS have gained a world-wide reputation for MAGNIFICENCE, CHEAPNESS, and UTILITY, having no equal. Registered New Designs, and considered Works of Art. Thousands of Repeat Orders and Testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. SPECIAL OFFER.—Three for 5/9; Six for 11/3; Twelve for 22/-

The "Queen's Royal" Household Carpets and Hearthrugs are patronised by Royalty, Nobility, and Clergy from all parts of the Empire.
Gigantic Sale of the "Queen's Royal" Household Reversible Rich Turkey Pattern

CARPETS (Reg.)

Trade Mark on all Goods. Beware of Imitations.

Admittedly the Cheapest in the World. *Woven without seam Altogether superior quality, with handsome border to correspond. A marvel for excellence and beauty. Thousands of Repeat Orders and Testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.*

6ft. by 9ft.	7/6	REDUCED SALE PRICE.	10½ft. by 12ft.	18/0	
8ft. by 9ft.	9/0		12ft. by 12ft.	21/0	
6ft. by 12ft.	13/6		9ft. by 15ft.	19/6	
9ft. by 9ft.	11/0		12ft. by 13½ft.	22/0	
9ft. by 10½ft.	13/6		12ft. by 15ft.	25/6	
9ft. by 12ft.	15/0		12ft. by 18ft.	30.0	
9ft. by 13½ft.	16/6		12ft. by 21ft.	35/6	

Octagon Villa, The Lizard, R.S.O., 15/8/98.—J. CARWARDINE, Esq., writes: "I am very pleased with the Carpet you sent me. I have saved 50 per cent. by giving you the order. I paid half as much again to a local tradesman for Carpets the same quality a year ago. I have never been so pleased of any former purchase."

Also RICH VELVET PILE STAIR CARPETS, bordered to match, 18in. wide, 1/8 per yard; 22½in. wide, 2/- per yard; 27in. wide, 2/3 per yard.

OUR NEW VENTURE.—Yes. Two different Pattern Hearthrugs or Carpets for the Price of One! *(Copyright.)*

H.R.H. Prince L. of Battenberg. H.R.H. Prince K. Bigit Siam. Marquis of Breadalbane. Sir Henry de Bathe. Sir Henry Bellingham. Sir E. H. Blair, Bart. H.I.H. Eugénie de Christoforo. Princess Paleologos Nicephoros Commenos. Duchess of Wellington. Marchioness of Brendalbane. Marchioness of Hastings. Archbishop of York. Princess de Croy.

To Readers of "Short Stories," 12/11/98, on receipt of Postal Order or Stamps, value **4/6**

(Regd.) We will send you THE LARGEST GENUINE REVERSIBLE CARPET in BRUSSELS PATTERN WITH RUG ever sold at the price, direct from the Looms to any address on receipt of amount. Suitable for drawing-room, dining-room, bedroom, etc., bordered and woven in Brussels patterns, as an advertisement for our goods, thus saving any middle profit. Remember these are woven, and are made of a material almost equal to wool. Thousands of these Carpets have been already sold at double these prices.
SPECIAL OFFER—2 CARPETS and 2 RUGS, 8s. [Cut this out.]

Colossal Sale of Rich Velvet Pile Real *Sale Price*

BRUSSELS HEARTHRUGS 5/6

In Rich Oriental and Indian Art Designs, measuring 6ft. by 3ft., which for price, real value, wight and richness of manufacture will be found unapproachable.
SPECIAL OFFER.—3 Rugs, 16/-; 6 for 31/-

"Melville Castle, Ghaswade, Midlothian, June 1st.
The Right Honourable The VISCOUNTESS MELVILLE writes: "I am very pleased with the 'Royal' Velvet Hearthrugs to hand, and would like four more Hearthrugs. Her ladyship would also like two Velvet Carpets at 39/-, one ditto 60/6 to match them. Cheque £3 14s. inclosed."

COLOSSAL SALE OF RICH VELVET PILE

REAL BRUSSELS CARPETS

Extraordinarily Heavy, very Best Quality, Newest and Choicest Designs. In Old Gold, Sultan, Terra Cotta, Crimson, Sky, Navy, and the latest colours. With handsome border to correspond. Guaranteed to wear for years and give every satisfaction. The sizes and prices as follows (all ready for putting down):

REDUCED SALE PRICE LIST.

4½ft. by 7ft.	11/-	VELVET PILE BRUSSELS CARPET SQUARES.	9ft. by 12ft.	38/-	
6ft. by 9ft.	18/-		11ft. by 12ft.	47/-	
7½ft. by 9ft.	23/-		12ft. by 13½ft.	59/-	
9ft. by 9ft.	28/-		12ft. by 16ft.	69/-	
1ft. by 10½ft.	33/-		12ft. by 18ft.	77/-	

Altogether superior quality, with handsome border to correspond. A marvel of excellence and beauty. Thousands of repeat orders and testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

Ramsden, Charibury, 4/8/98.—Lady HICKS BEACH writes: "Will Messrs. F. Hodgson and Son send her one of their 'Queen's Royal' Carpets, 9ft. by 9ft., 11/-? Cheque enclosed. The other parcel received safely, and I am pleased with it."

TURKEY PATTERN CARPETS

(Regd.)

Reversible, woven throughout, bordered, richly blended in several colours to suit any furniture. These goods cannot be distinguished from real Brussels when laid down, and cannot be excelled in durability.

Size.	Each.		Size.	Each.
6ft. by 9ft.	4/9	REDUCED SALE PRICE.	9ft. by 15ft.	12/6
7½ft. by 9ft.	5/11		12ft. by 12ft.	12/9
8ft. by 9ft.	7/6		12ft. by 13½ft.	14/6
9ft. by 10½ft.	8/6		12ft. by 15ft.	15/9
9ft. by 12ft.	9/6		12ft. by 18ft.	19/6
10½ft. by 12ft.	11/6		12ft. by 21ft.	22/6

When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

PRODIGIOUS SALE of the "PRUDENTIAL."

A Reversible "Prudential" Hearthrug (Reg.), to match above Carpets, sent for 1/6 extra, size 2yd. long and 1yd. wide. Special Offer, Three Hearthrugs for 4/3, or Six for 8/-, or Twelve for 15/6, sterling value.

ILLUSTRATED BARGAIN CATALOGUES OF CARPETS, HEARTHRUGS, TABLE LINEN, CURTAINS, etc., POST FREE, if mentioning *Short Stories* when writing.

We rely upon Spontaneous Repeat Orders from our Clients for the maintenance of our Trade. Established nearly a Quarter of a Century. All orders despatched same day in rotation as they arrive by post. N.B.—Foreign Orders executed and packed free, and shipped at lowest rates. Telegraphic Address: "ECLIPSE, LEEDS." Telephone, No. 915.
Cheques and P.O.'s payable to—

Short Stories CARPET COUPON. 12/11/98.

On receipt of this Coupon and P.O. or Stamps for amount, we guarantee to send any goods as above to your address in any part of the United Kingdom. Cash returned in full if not satisfied.
(Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.

F. HODGSON & SON,

Manufacturers, Importers, and Merchants,

WOODSLEY ROAD, LEEDS.

SPECIAL 1898.

SPECIALLY REDUCED INTRODUCTION

SALE PARCEL WITH FREE GIFT

enclosed, consisting of

1 Magnificently Rich Cream-Coloured Curly Sheepskin Hearthrug, average size 6 feet by 3 feet, perfection in quality.

1 Beautiful Reversible Art Crimson Plush Bed Rug, Sofa Cover, or Table Cover, double warp, very heavy, size 50 inches by 78 inches.

2 Beautiful Silver Goatskin Door Mats, lined woollen cloth throughout, pinked edges, best finish, ornamental to any room.

1 Elegant Hair Brush, highly finished, with mirror back.

THE LOT **10/6**

Postage 9d. extra.

"Given" Away.

Providing *SHORT STORIES* Coupon, 12/11/98, is quoted, a FREE GIFT will be enclosed — a very handsome Electro Silver Plated "OWL" PEPPER STAND with coloured eyes and gilt feet. Cash returned if not satisfied. (Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.